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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication****Singh et al.**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0089435 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Apr. 26, 2007**(54) **PREDICTING MAINTENANCE IN A REFRIGERATION SYSTEM****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.****G01K 13/00** (2006.01)**G05D 23/32** (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.** **62/129; 62/157**

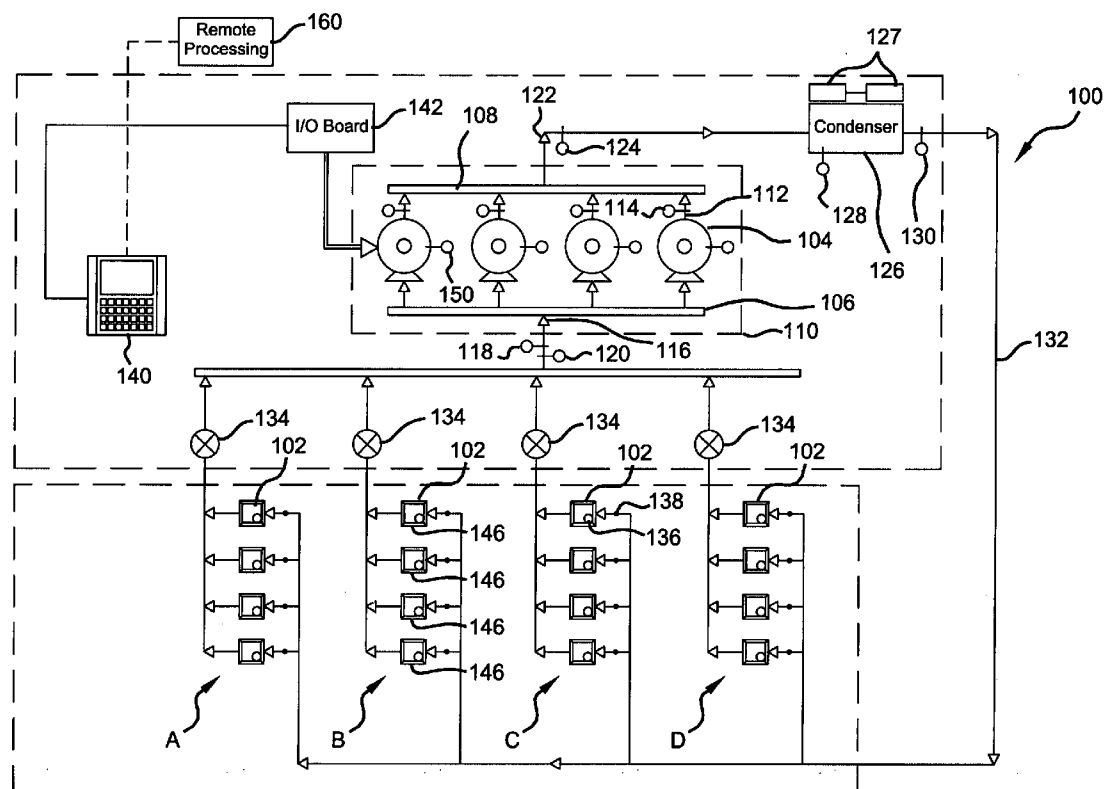
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A method for predicting maintenance in a refrigeration system includes counting occurrences of a compressor operating event and calculating a cumulative total of the compressor operating events. The method also comprises comparing the cumulative total with an operating threshold and estimating a time period until the cumulative total exceeds the operating threshold. The method may be executed by a controller or stored in a computer-readable medium.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/256,638**(22) Filed: **Oct. 21, 2005**

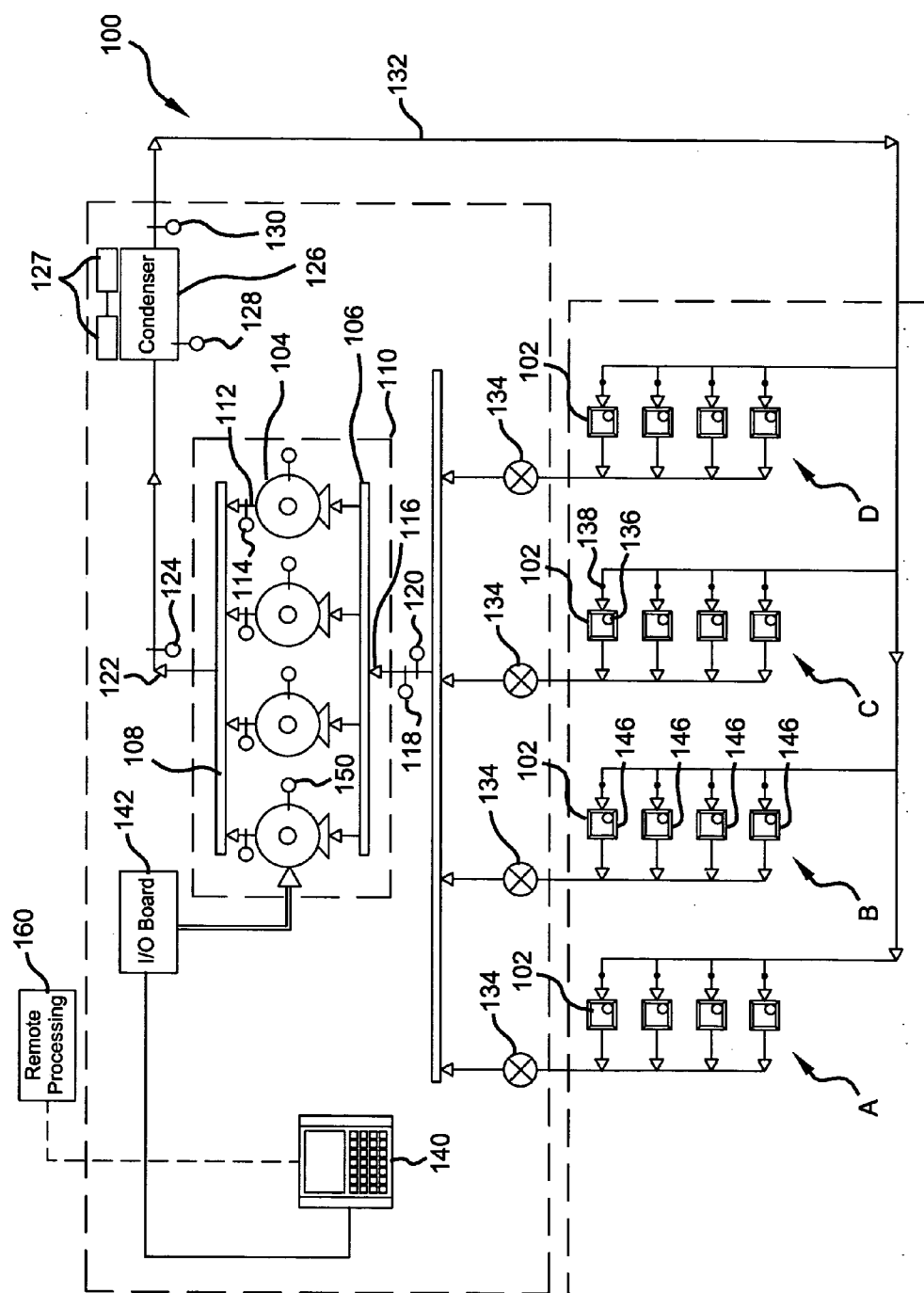


FIG 1

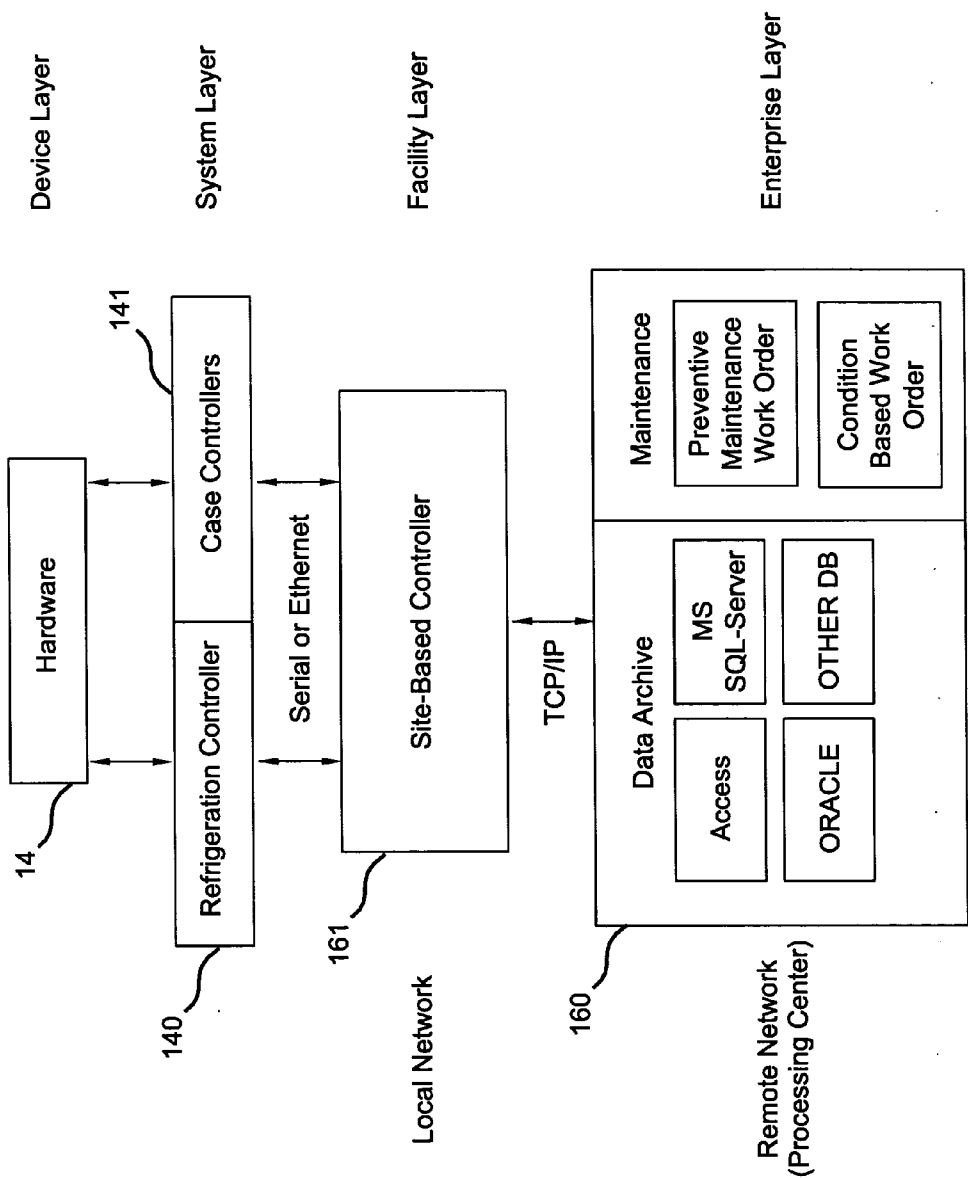


FIG 2

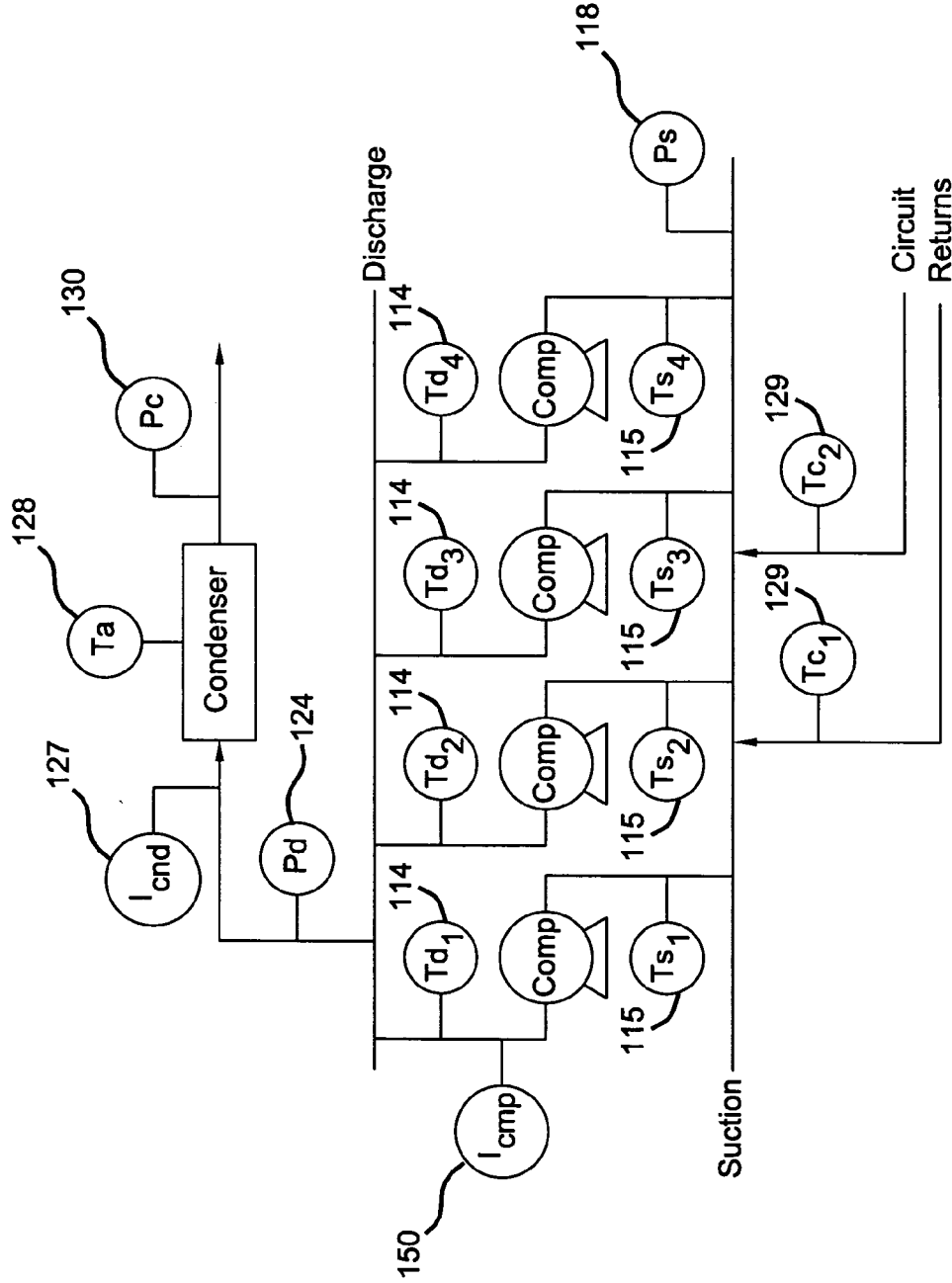


FIG 3

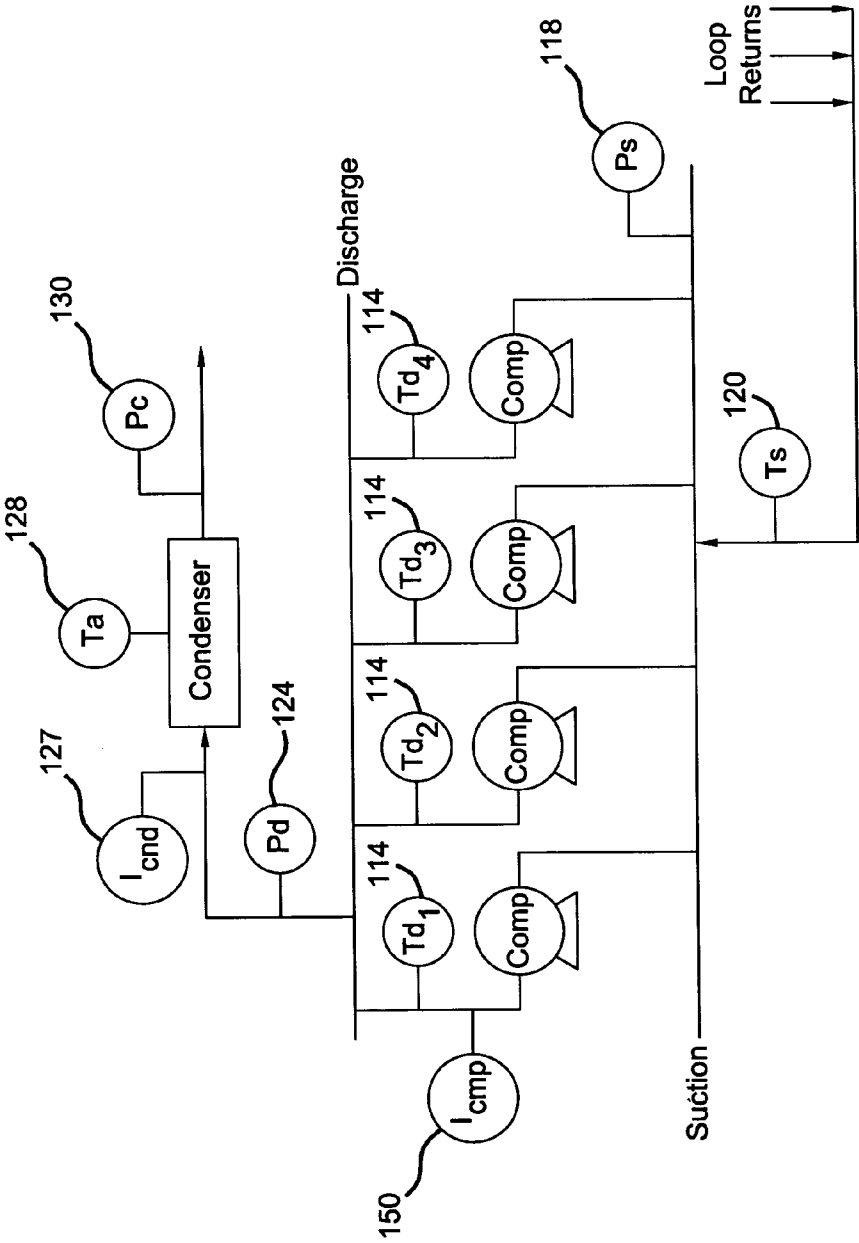


FIG 4

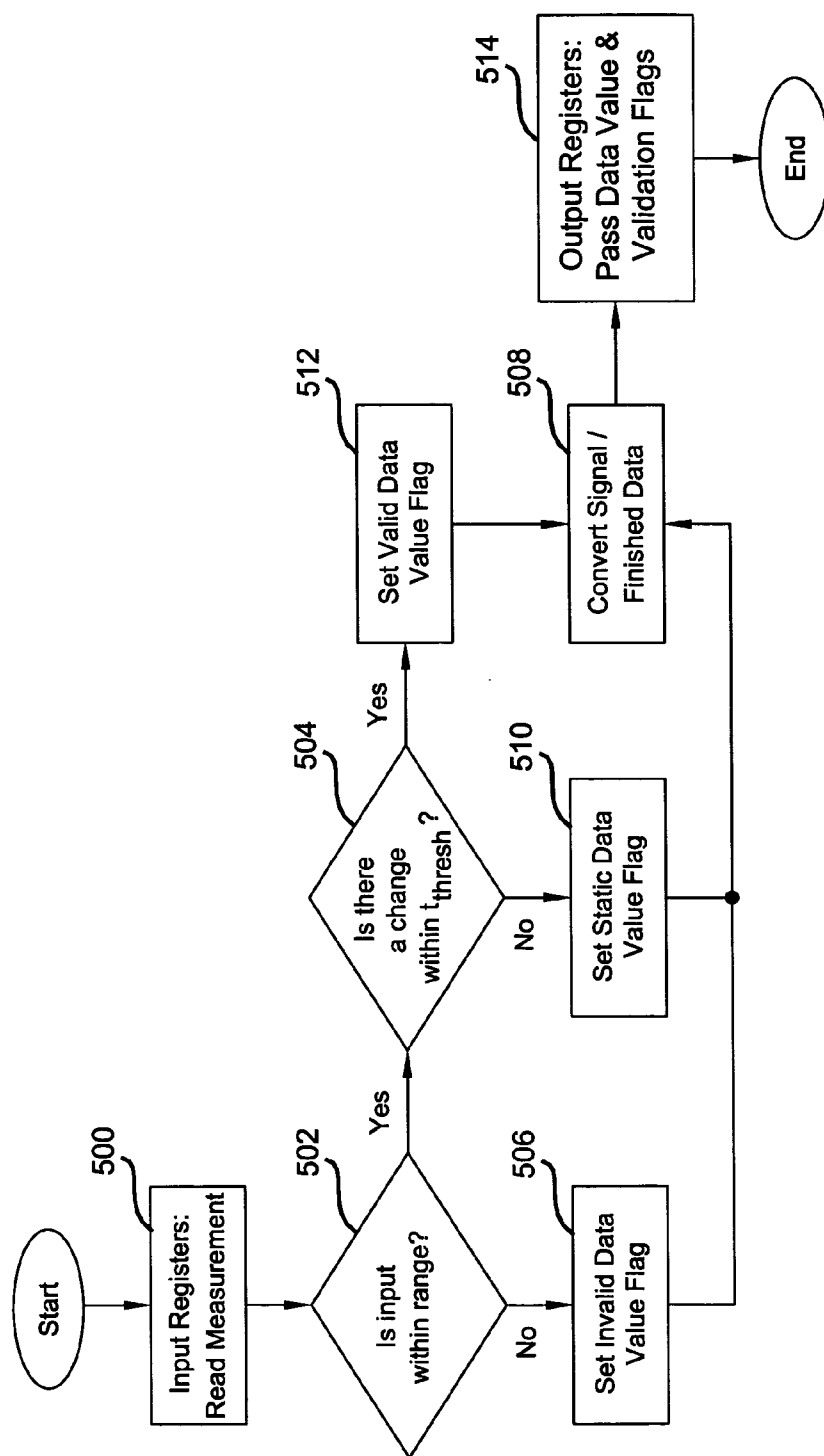


FIG 5

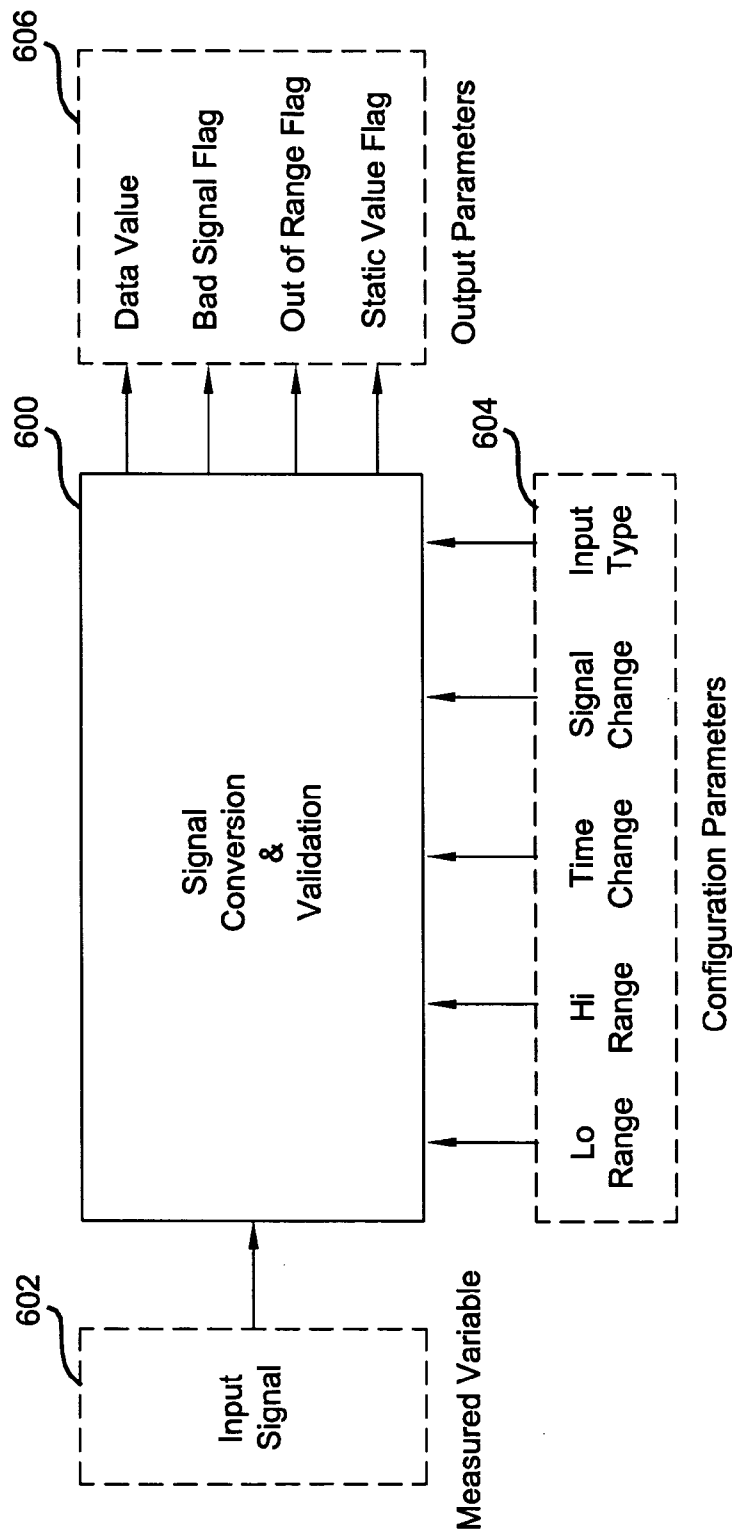


FIG 6

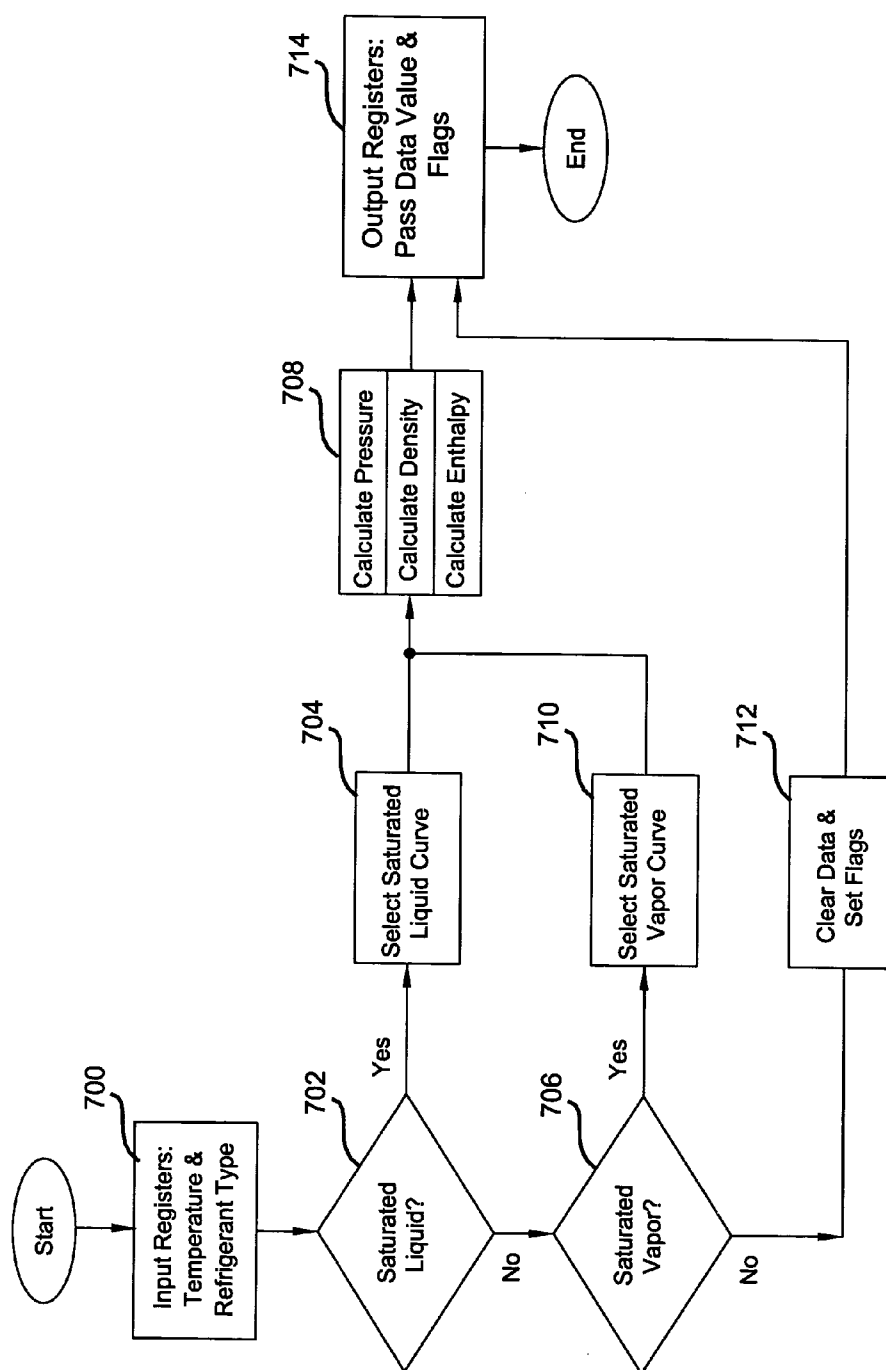


FIG 7

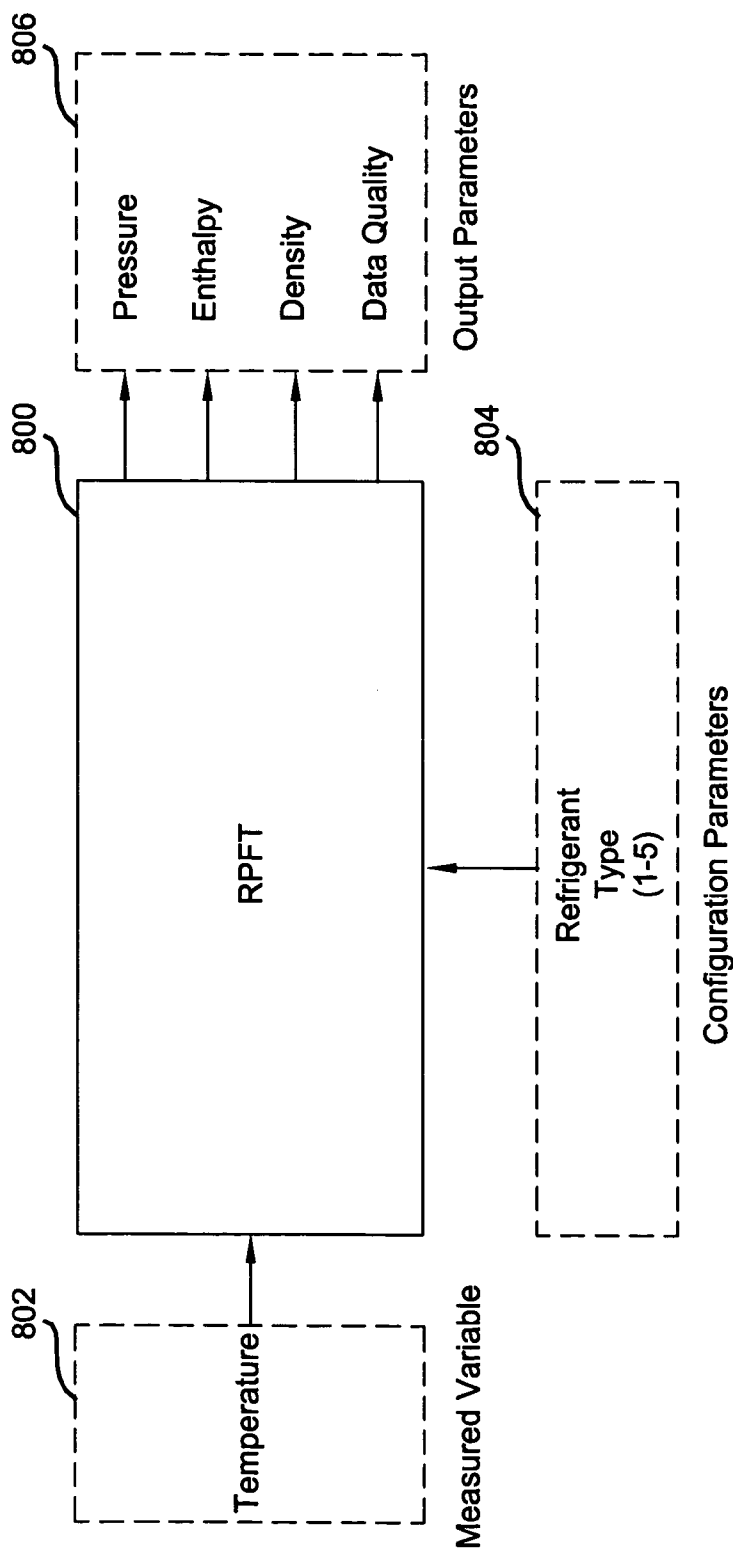


FIG 8

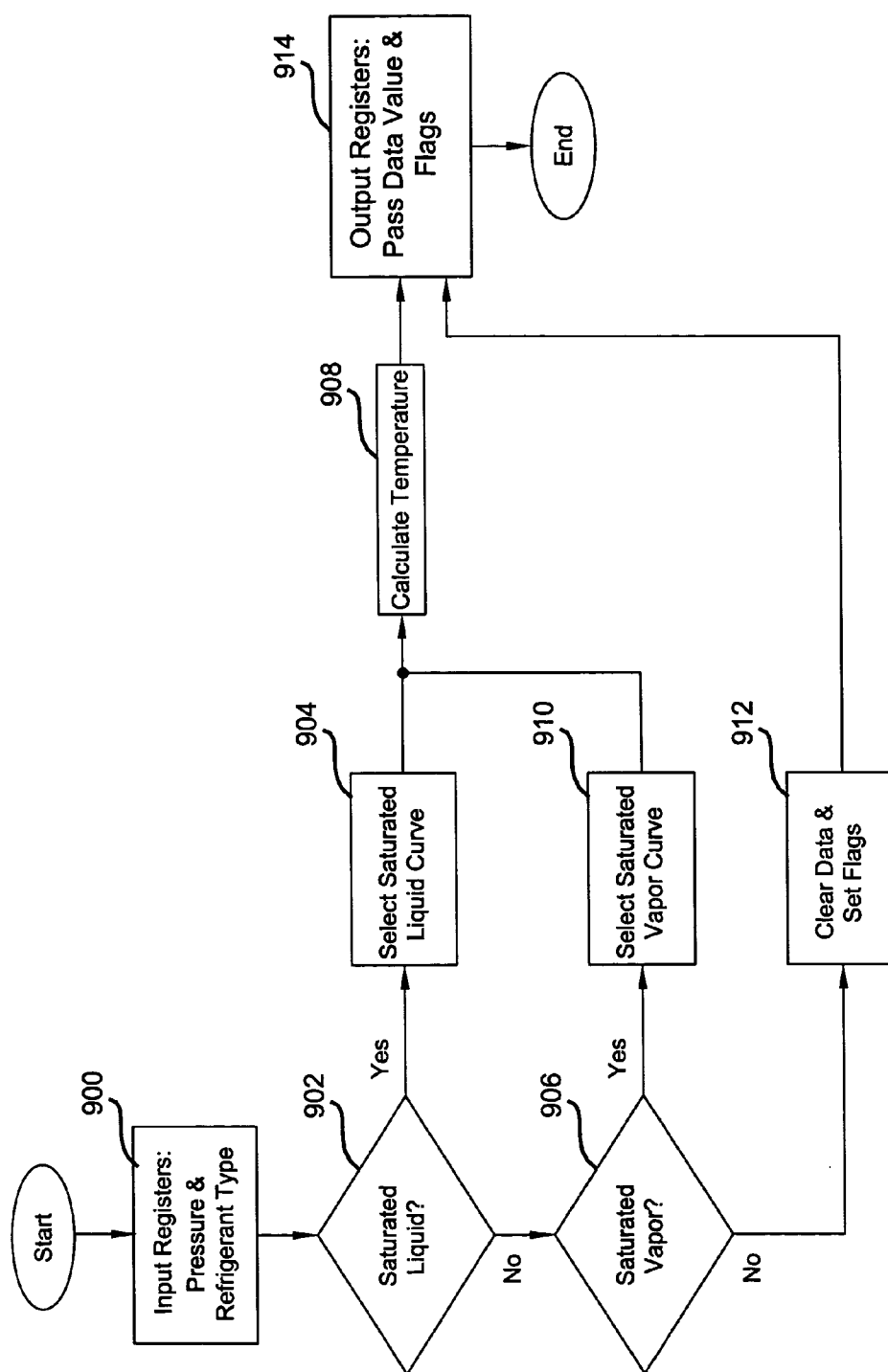


FIG 9

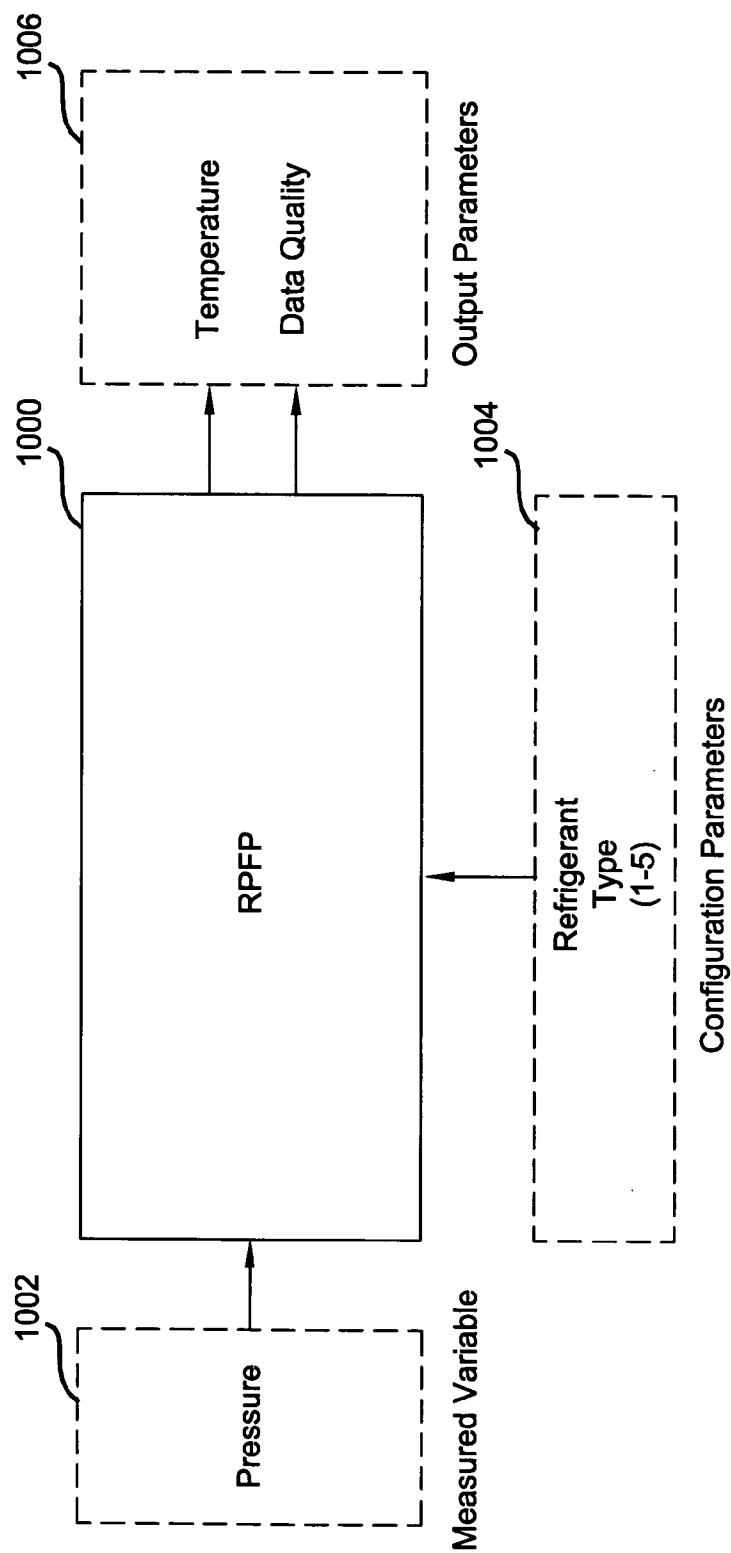


FIG 10

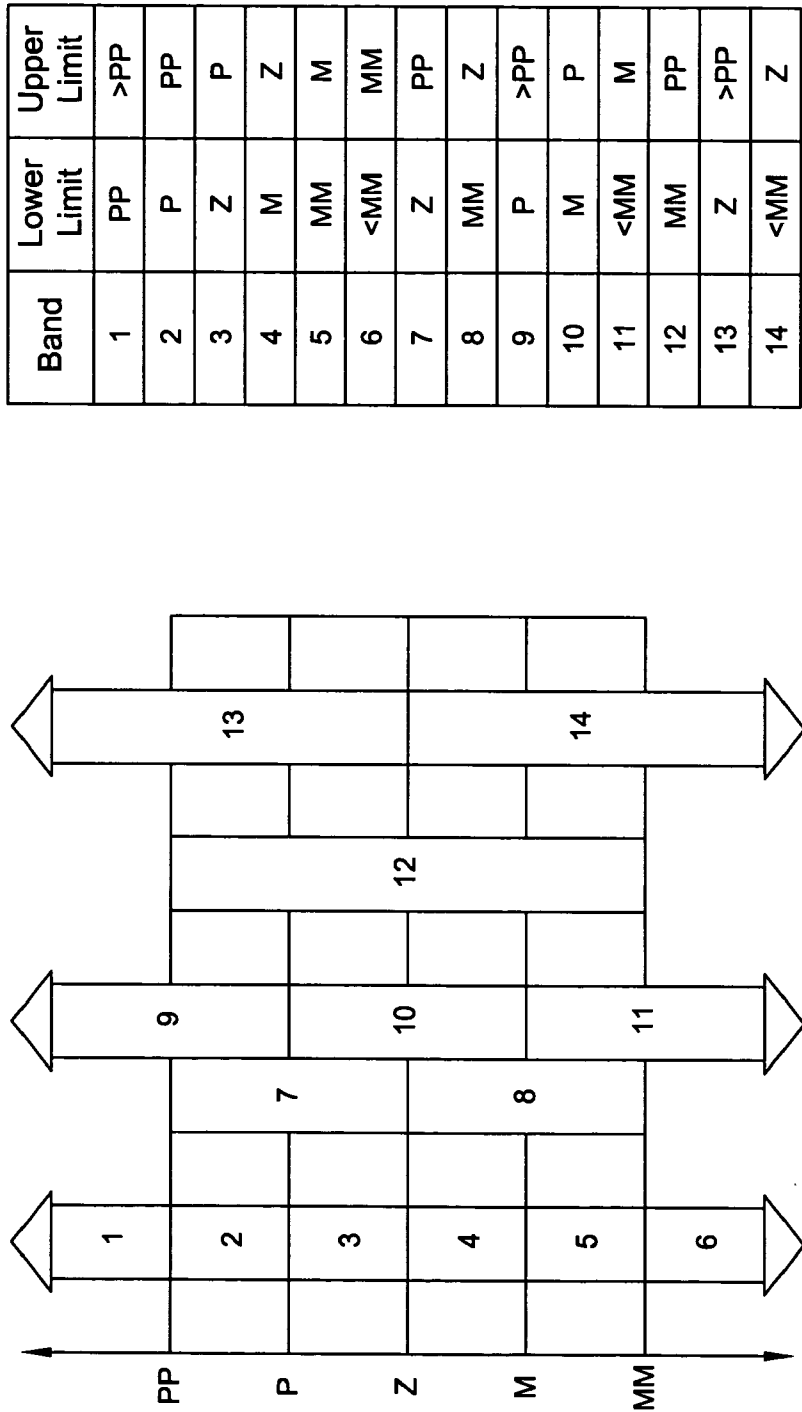


FIG 11

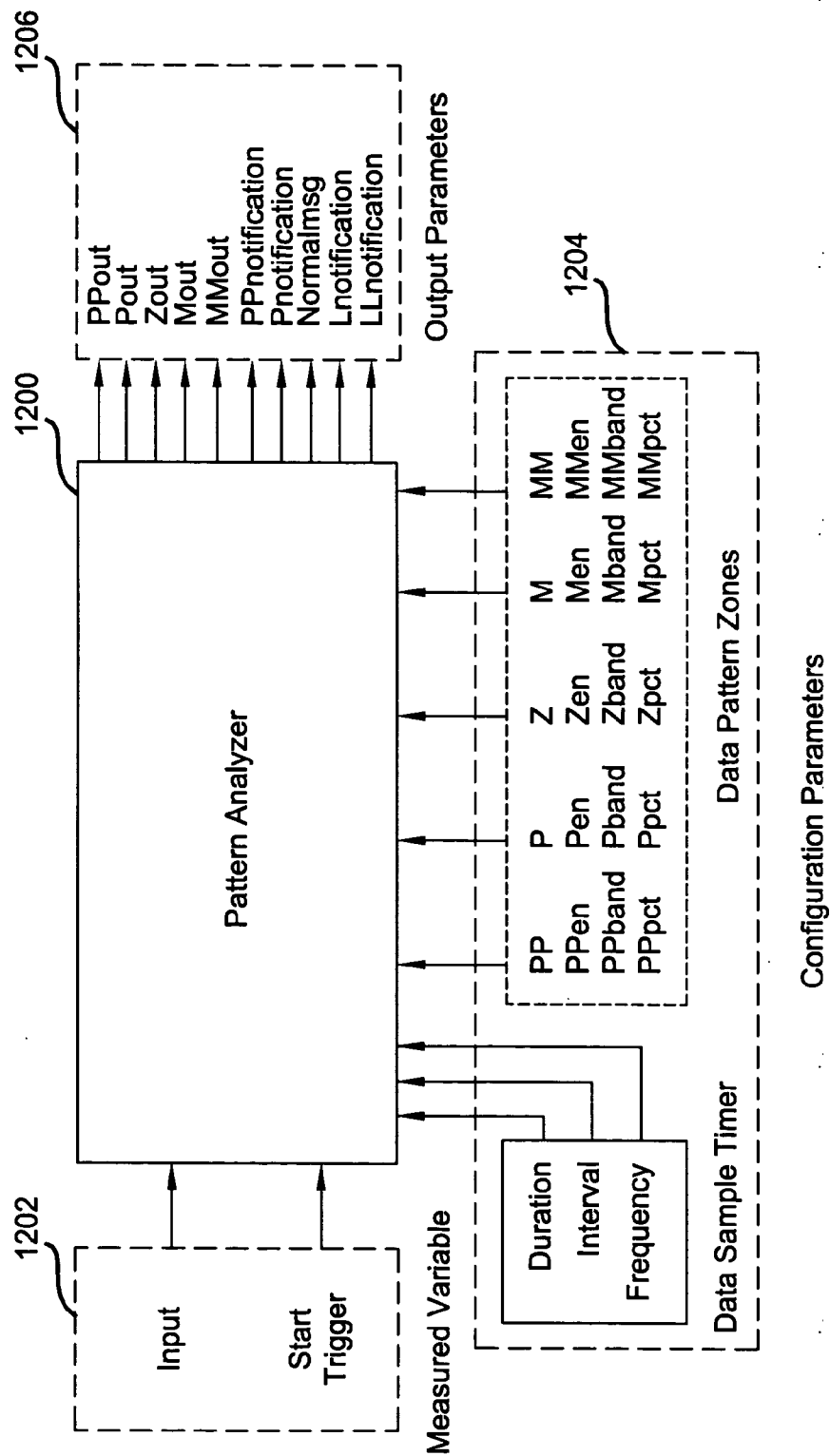


FIG 12

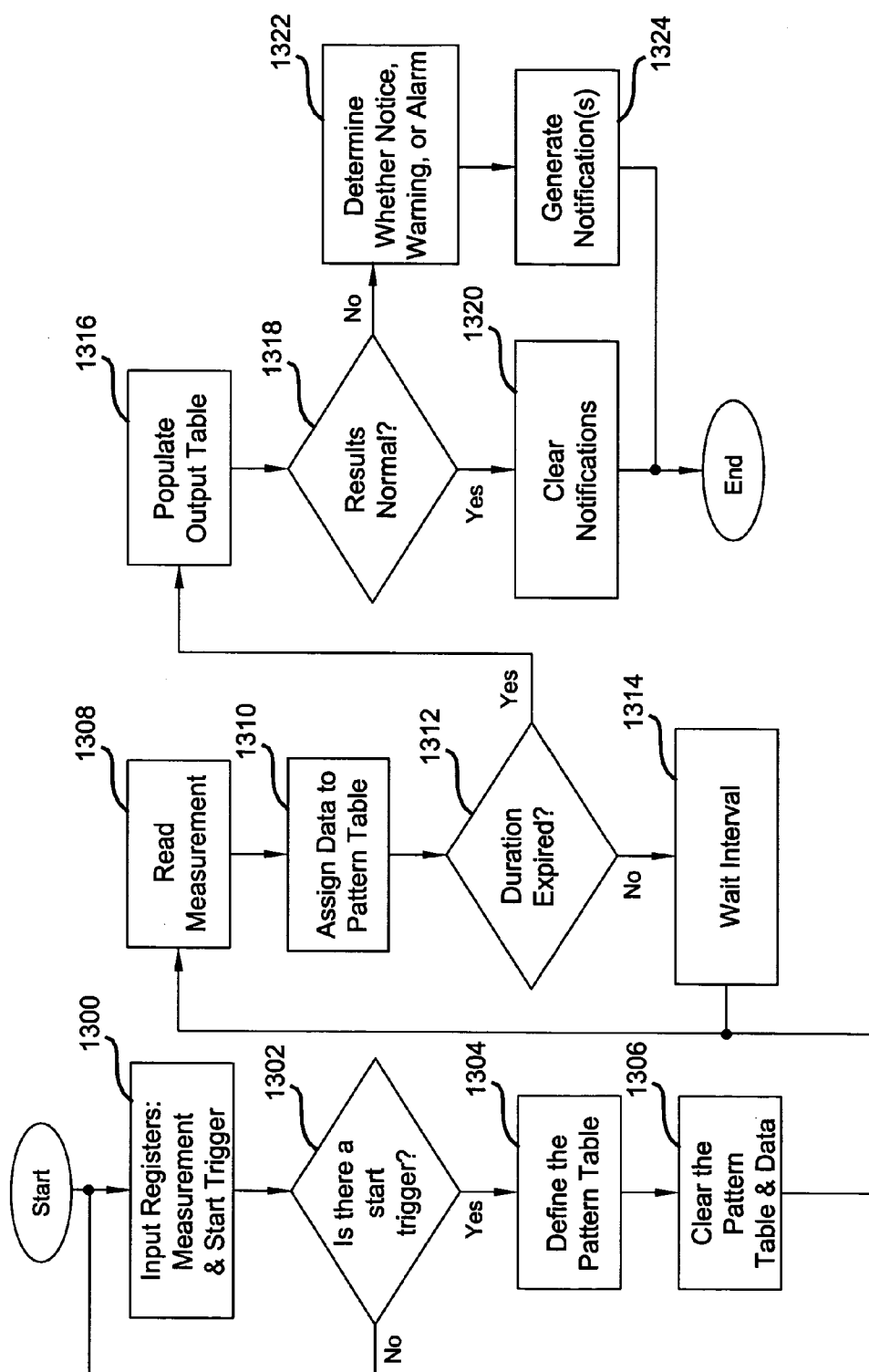


FIG 13

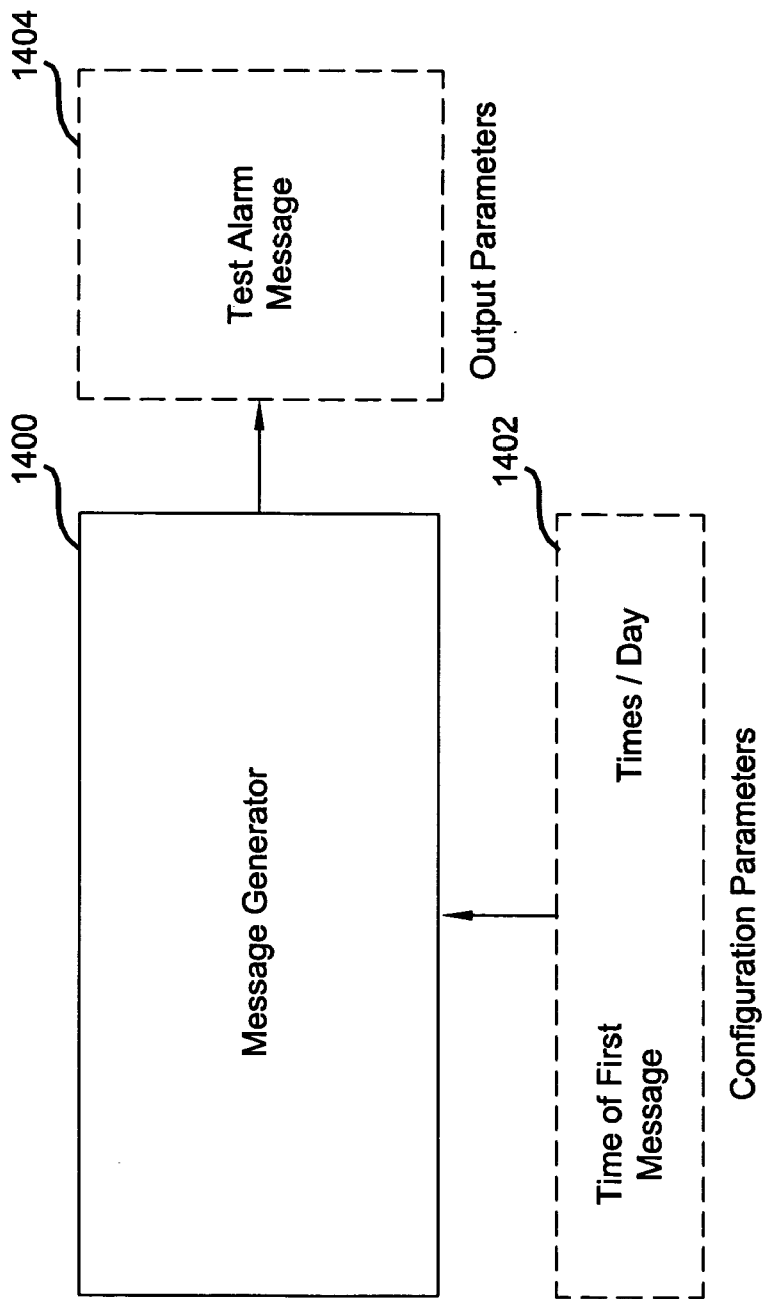


FIG 14

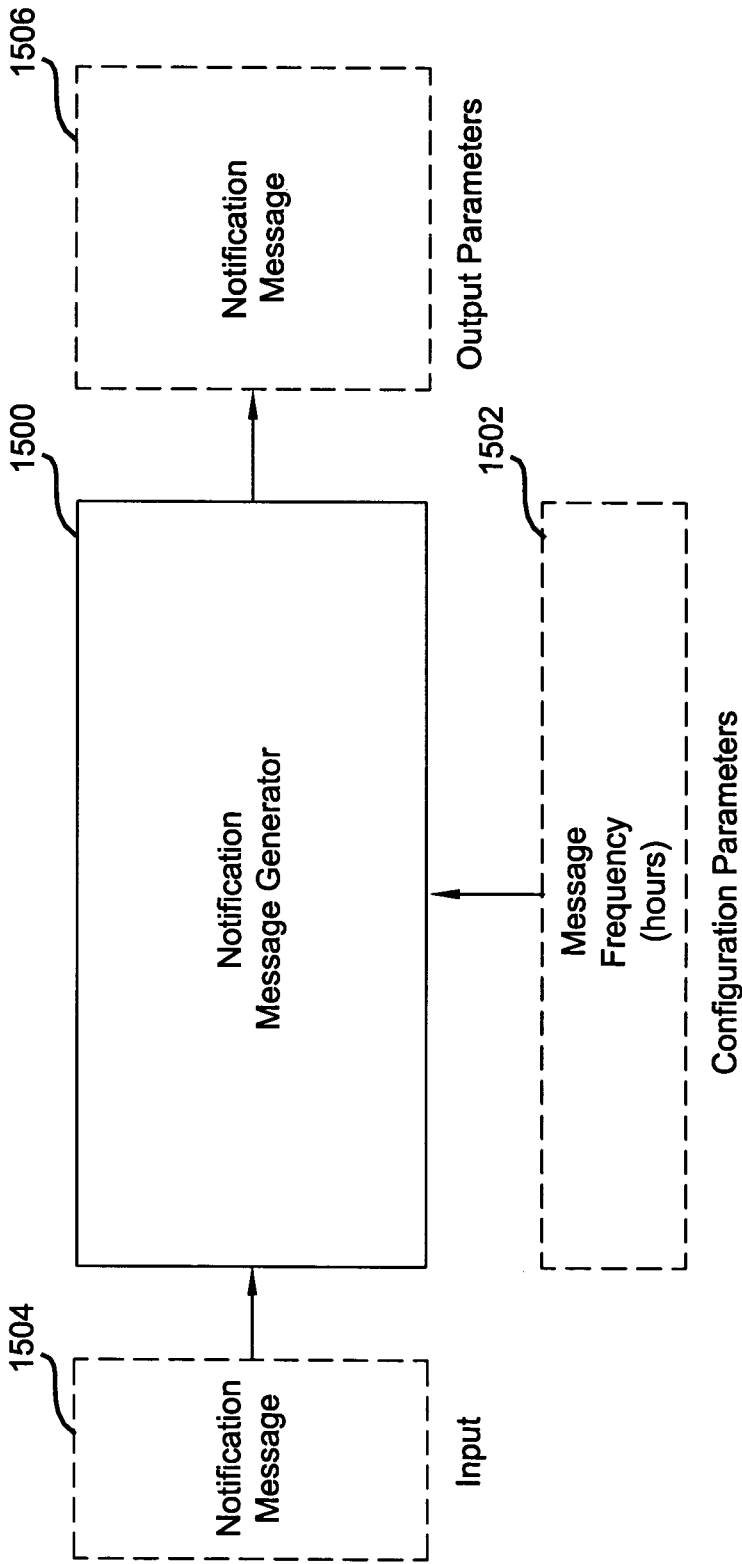


FIG 15

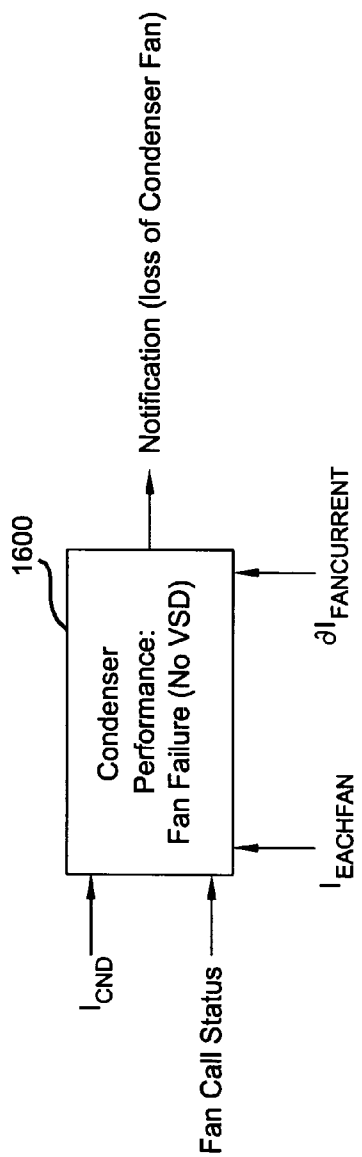


FIG 16

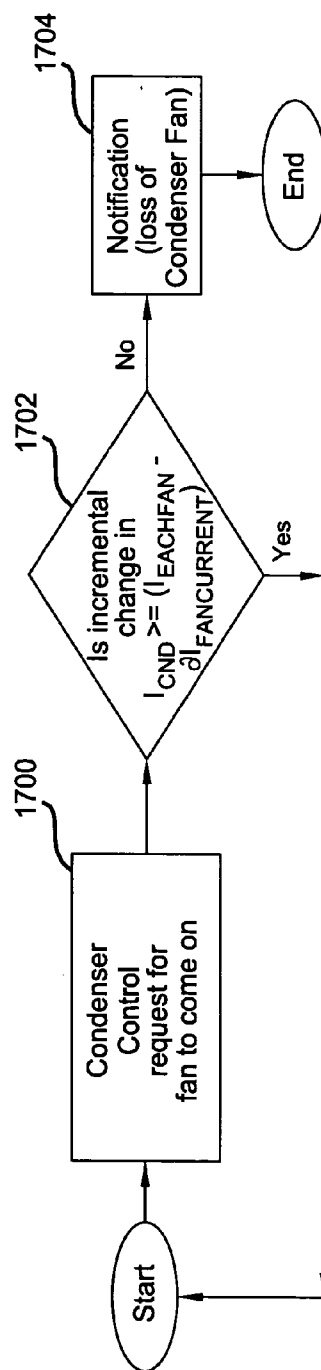


FIG 17

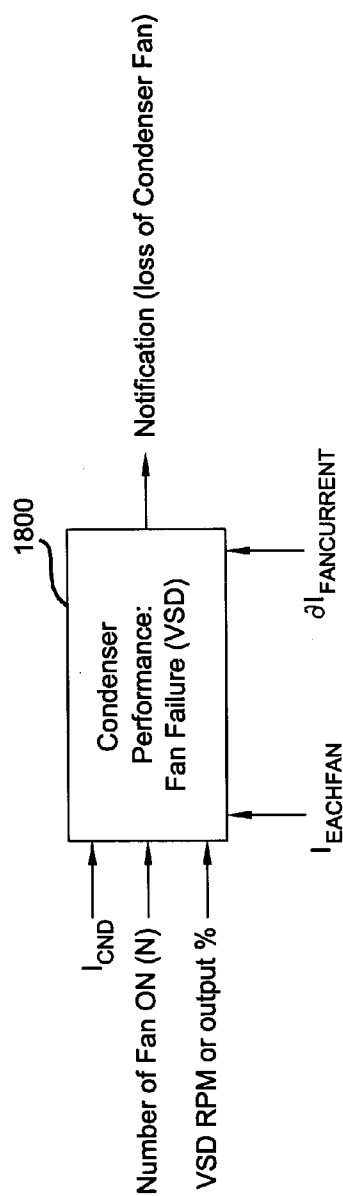


FIG 18

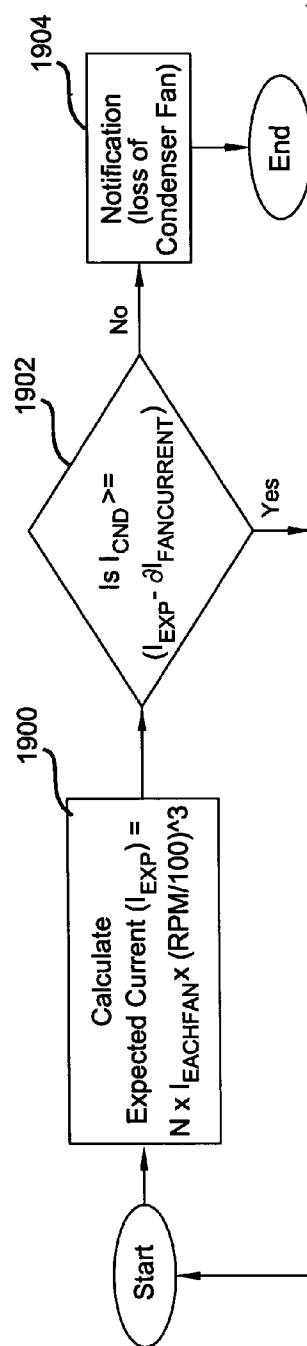


FIG 19

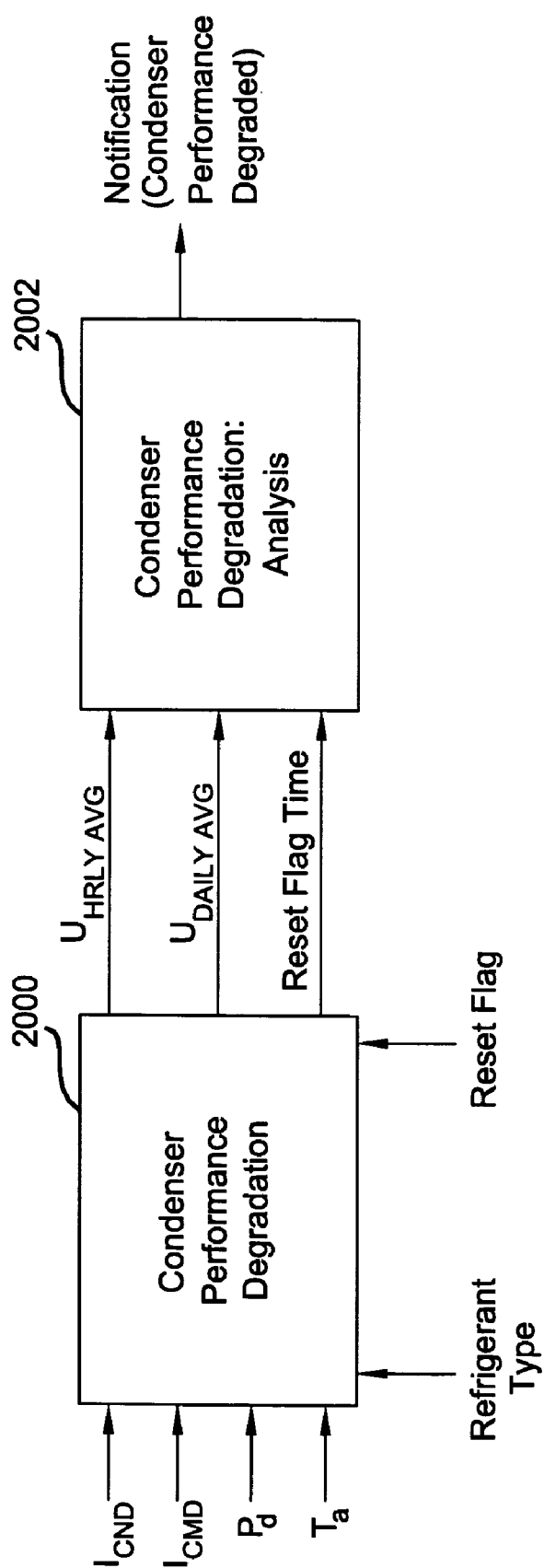


FIG 20

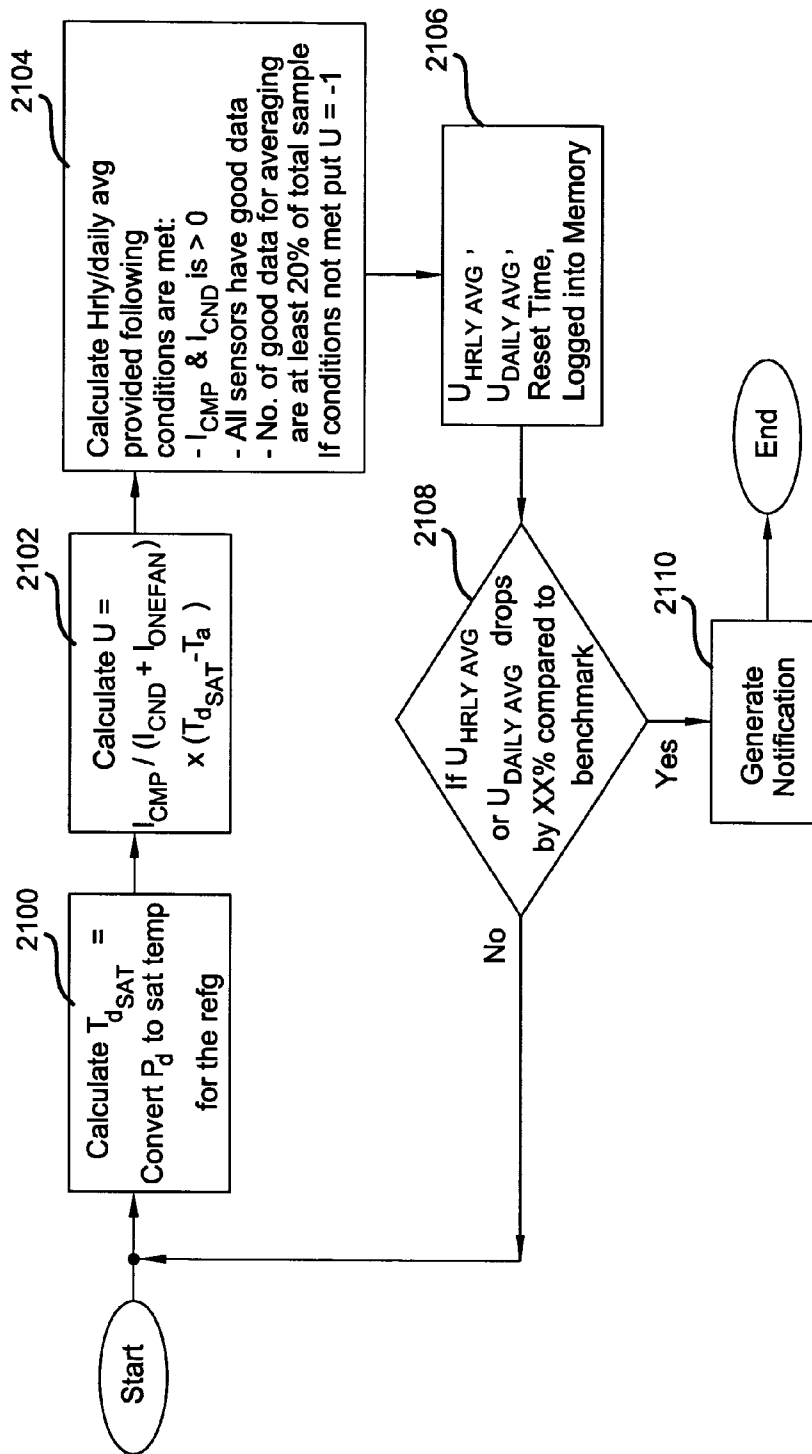


Fig 21

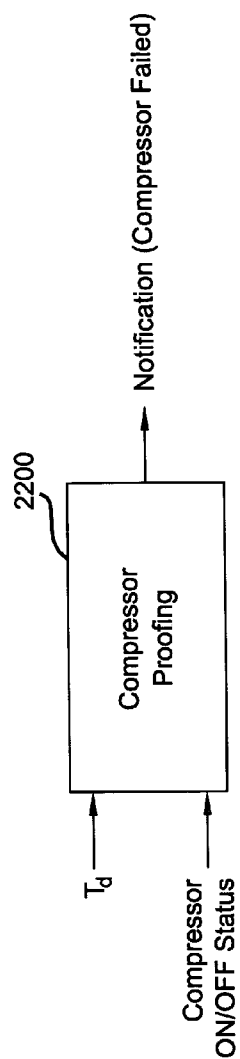


FIG 22

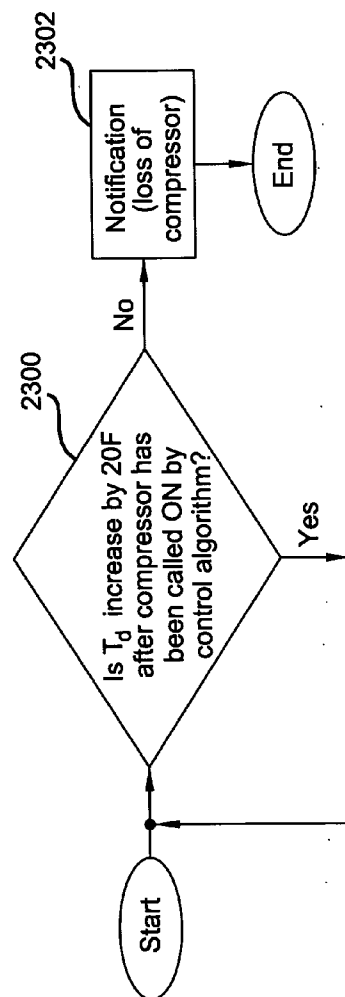


FIG 23

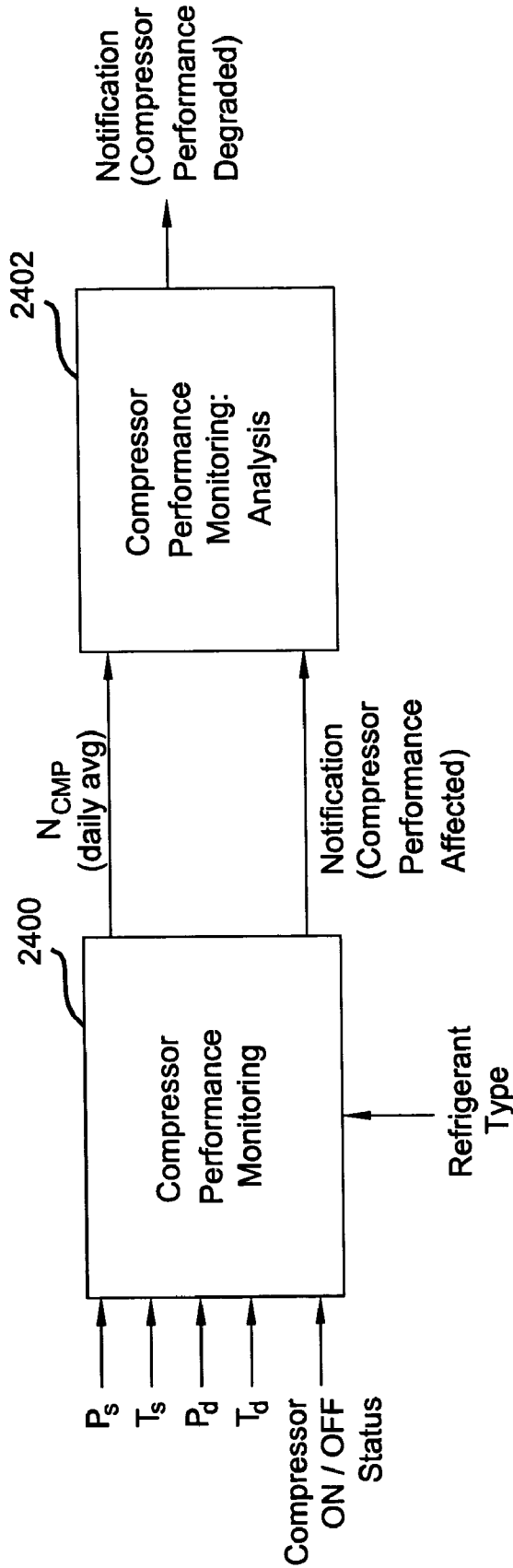


FIG 24

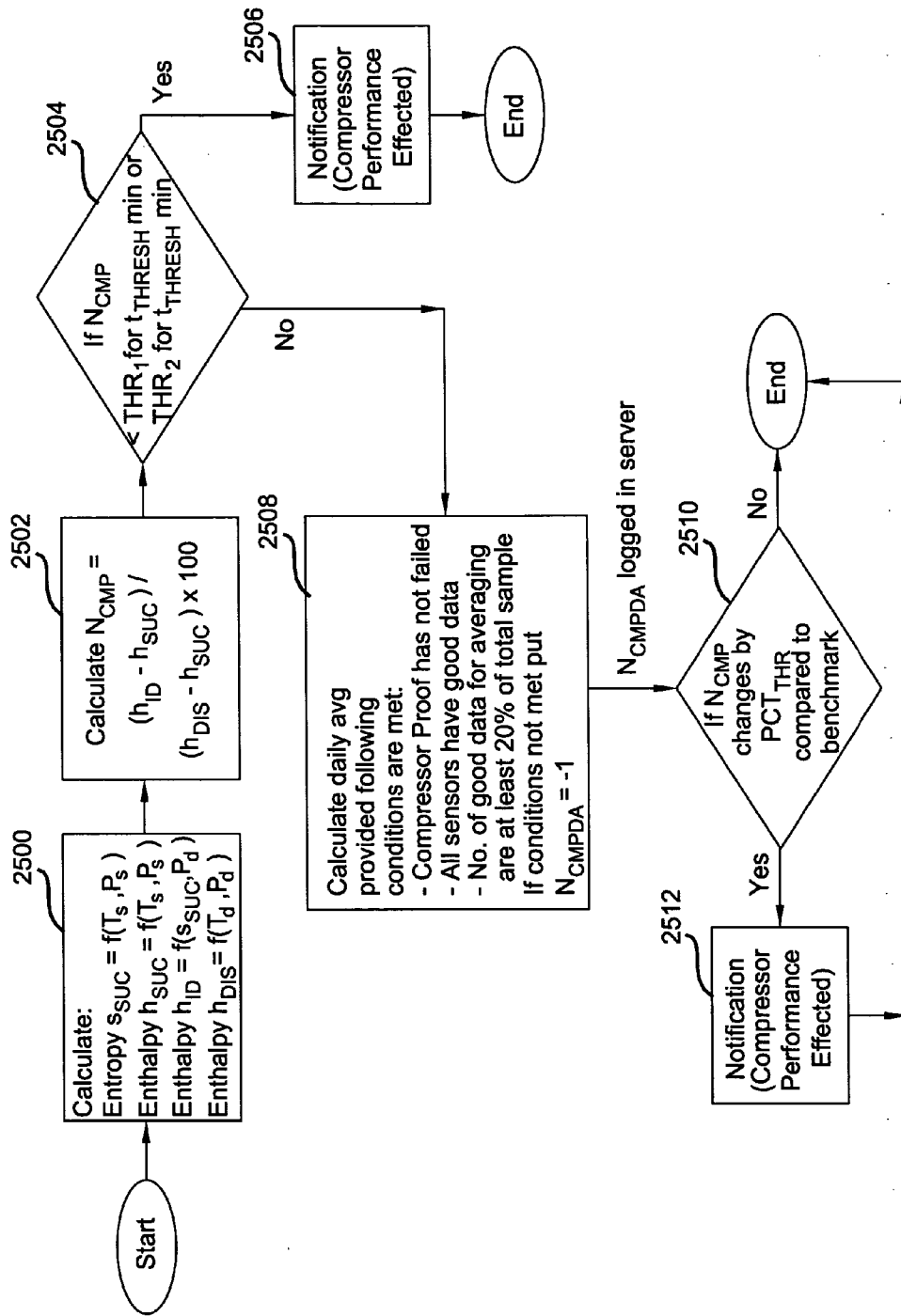


FIG 25

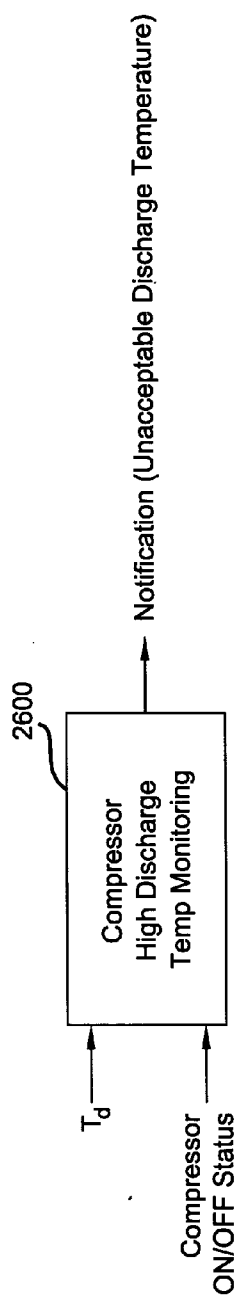


FIG 26

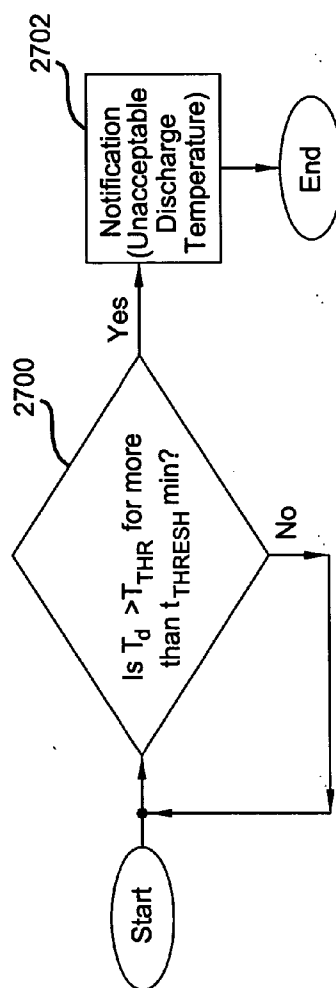


FIG 27

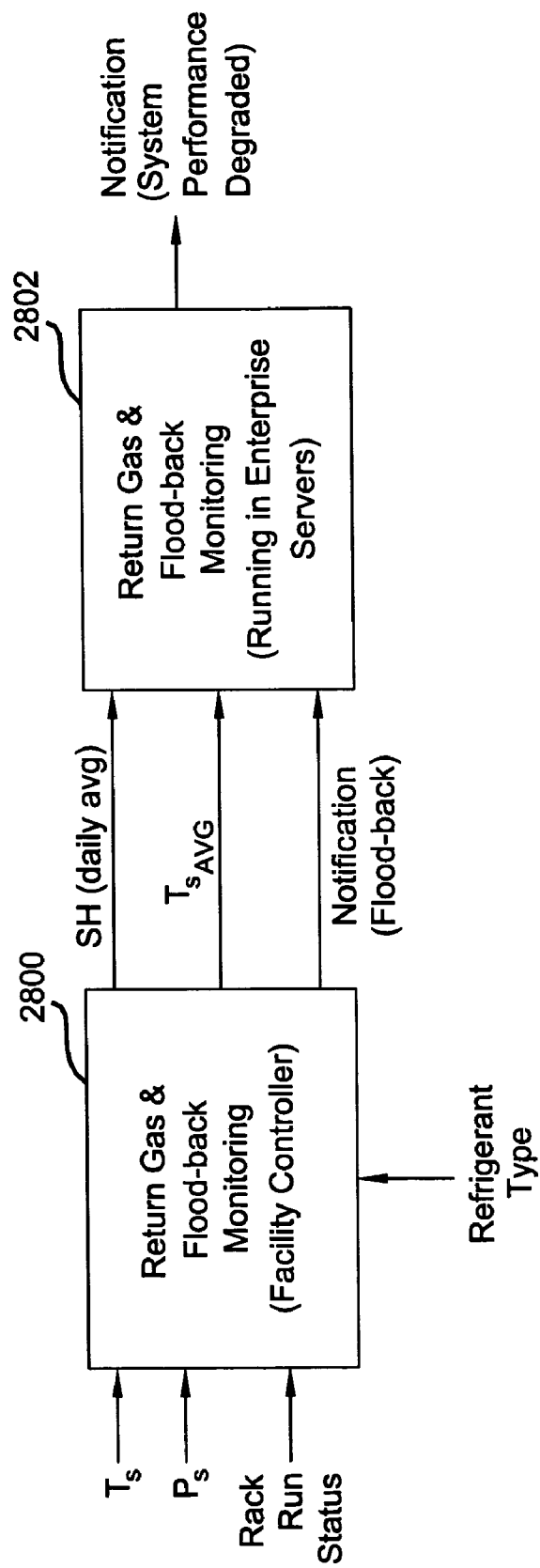


FIG 28

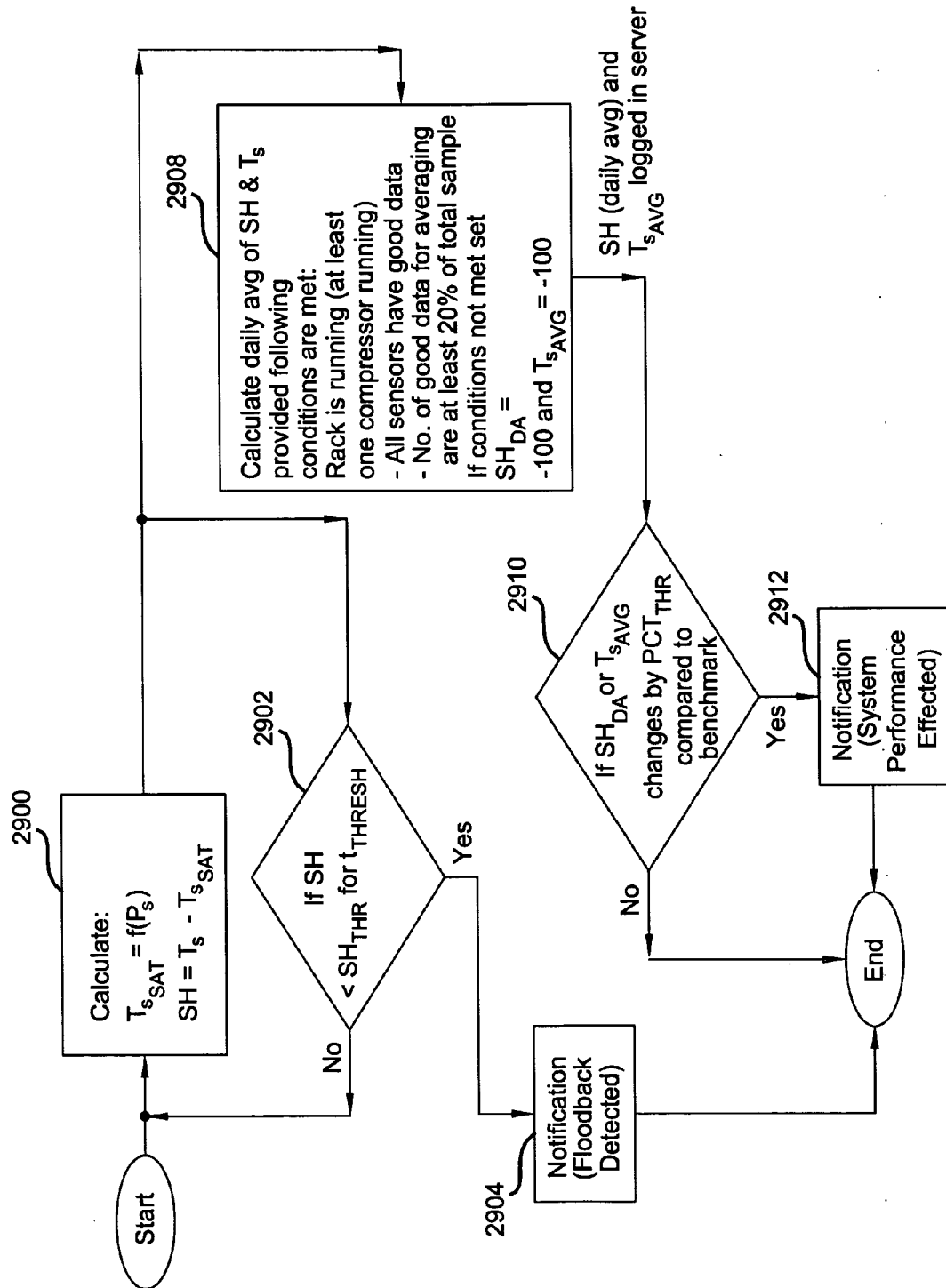


FIG 29

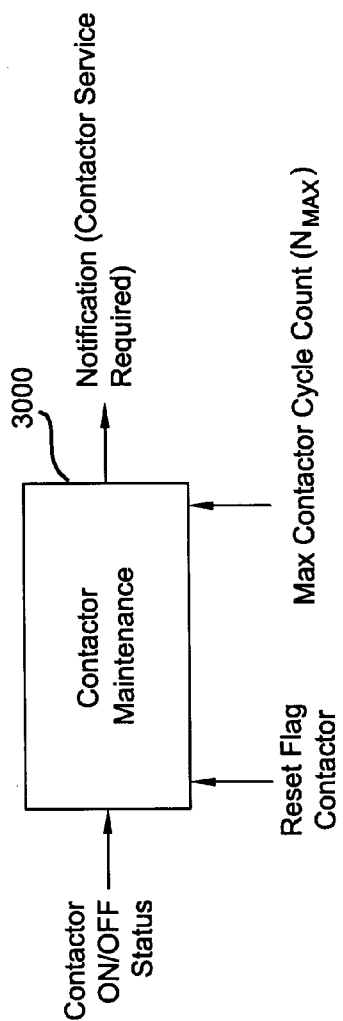


FIG 30

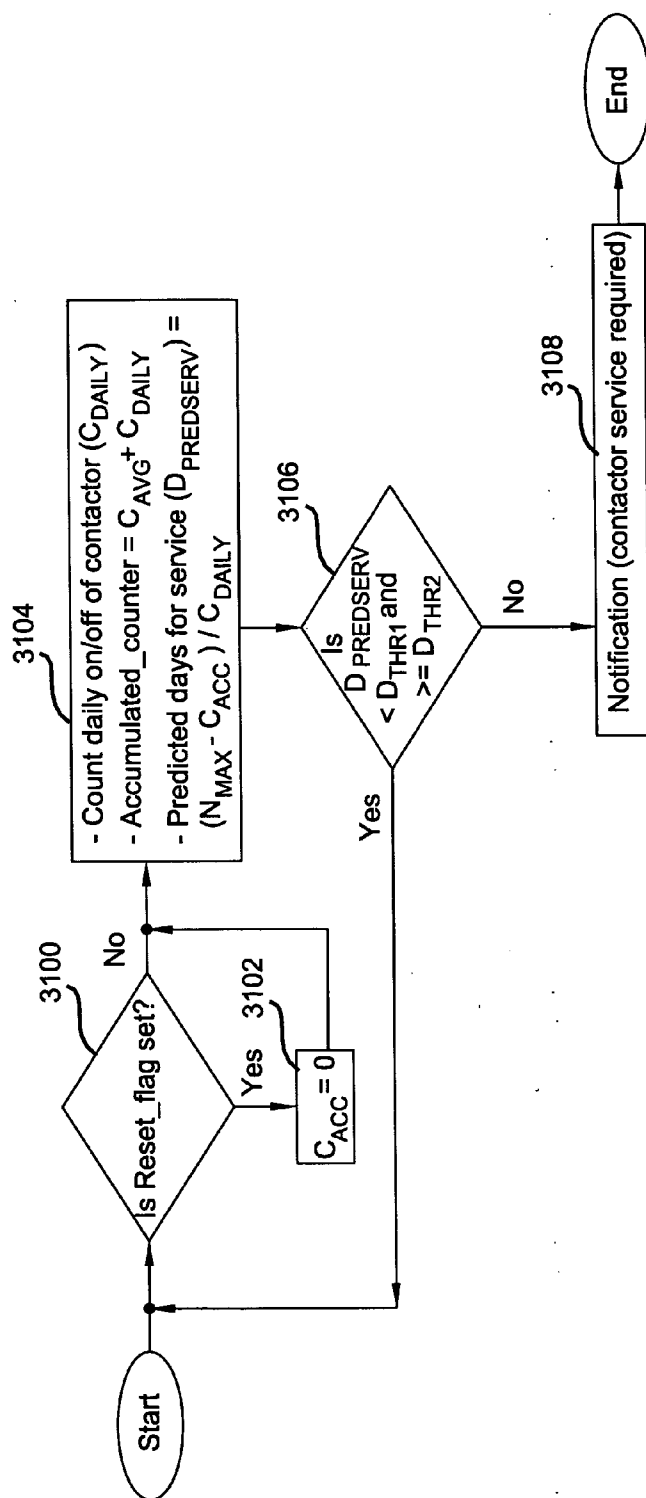


FIG 31

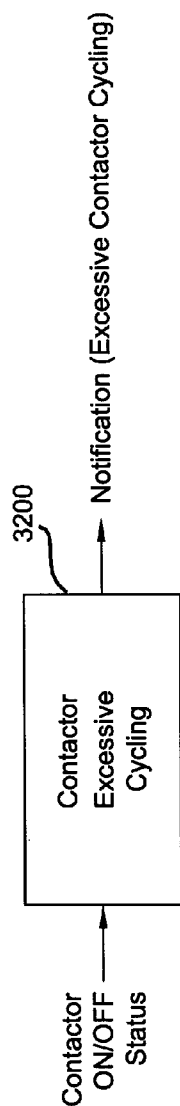


FIG 32

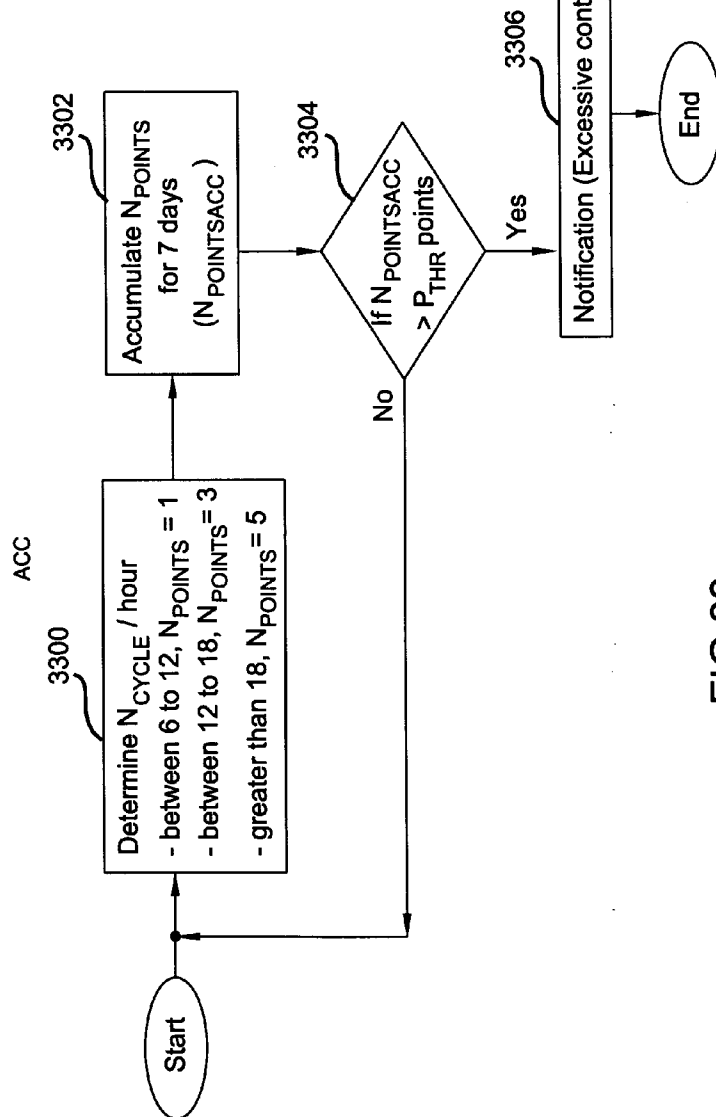


FIG 33

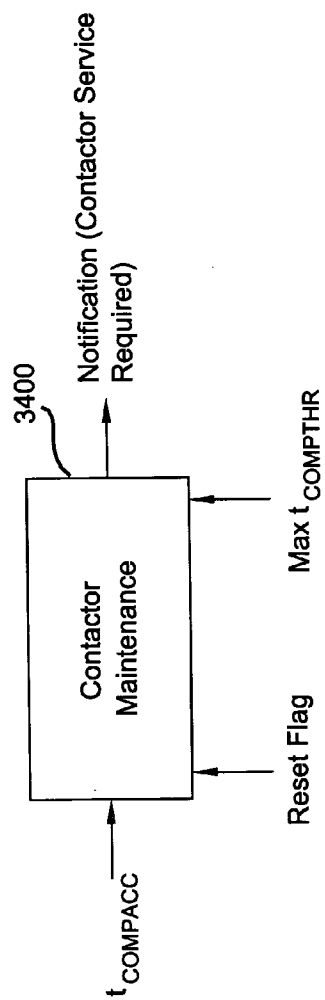


FIG 34

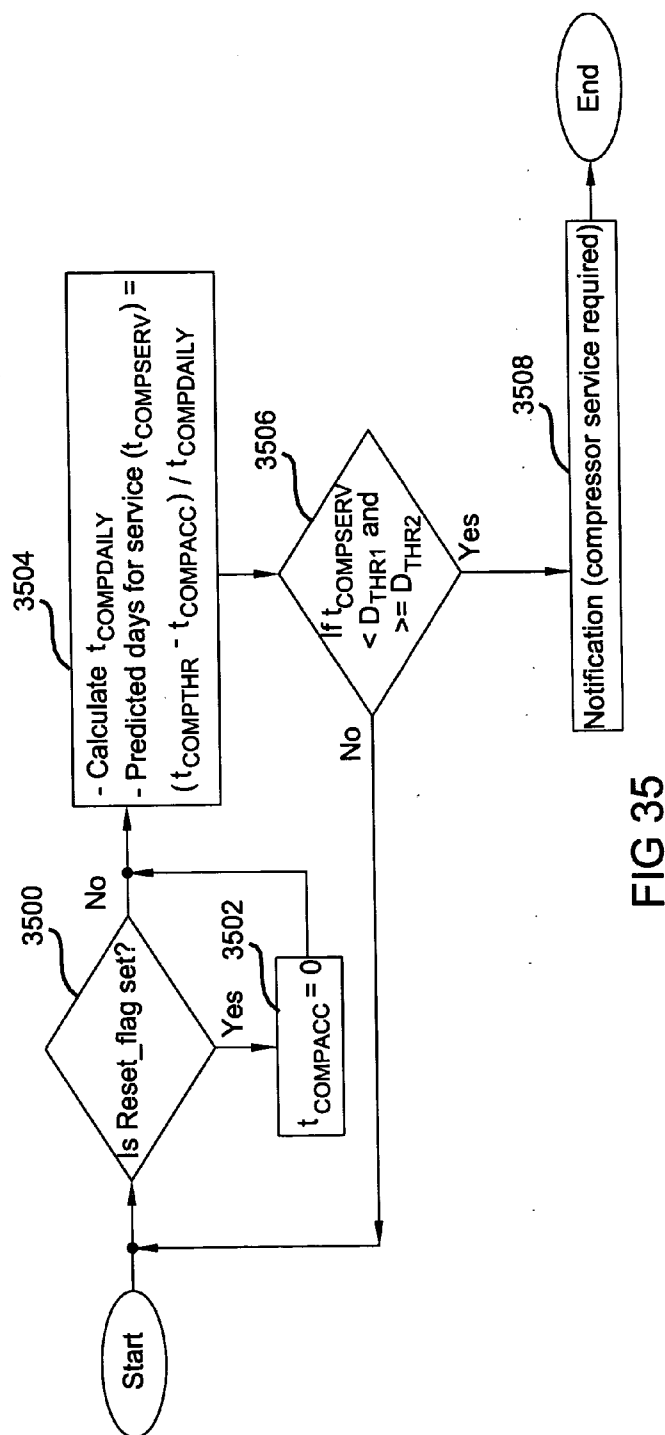


FIG 35

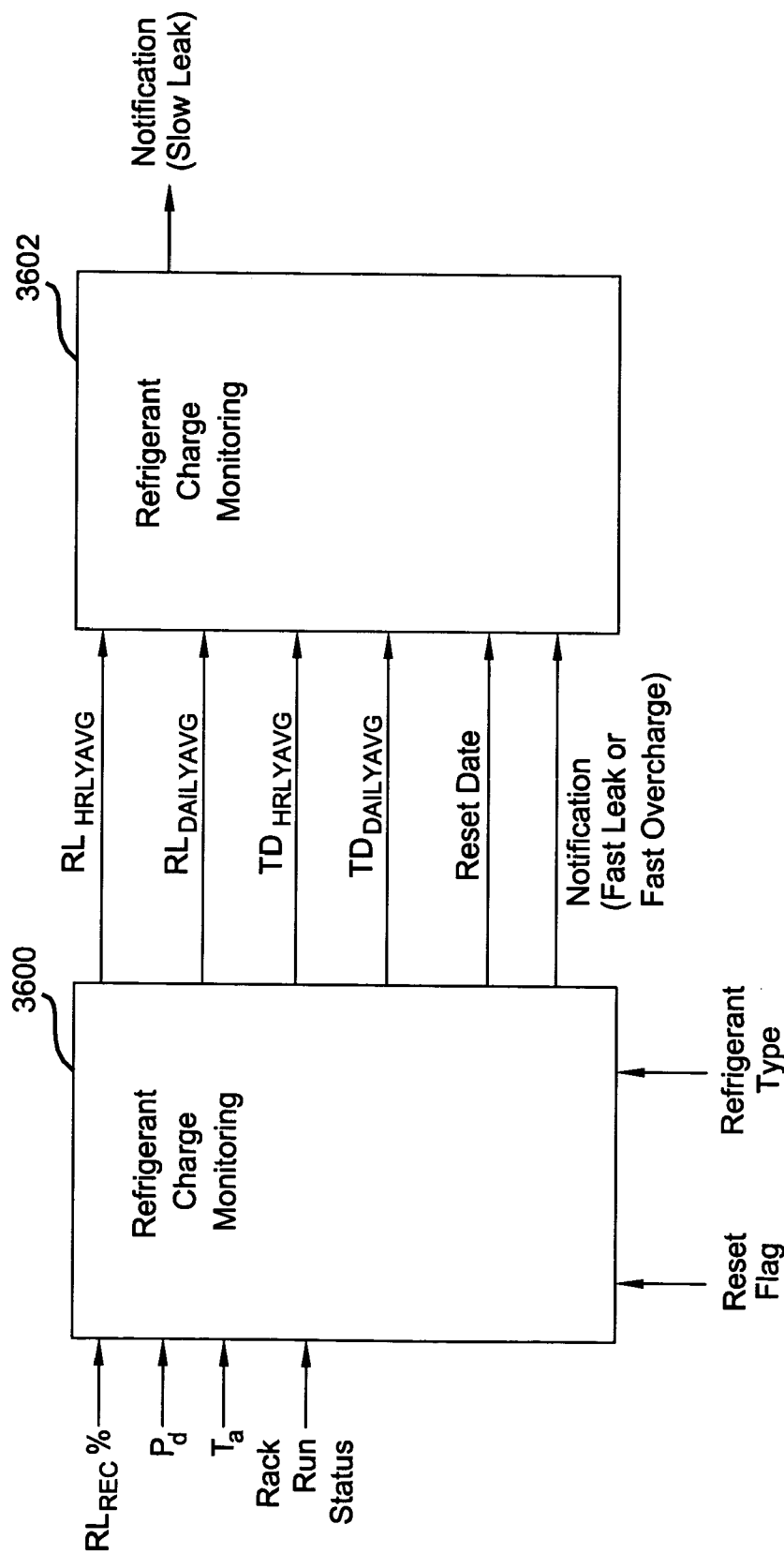


FIG 36

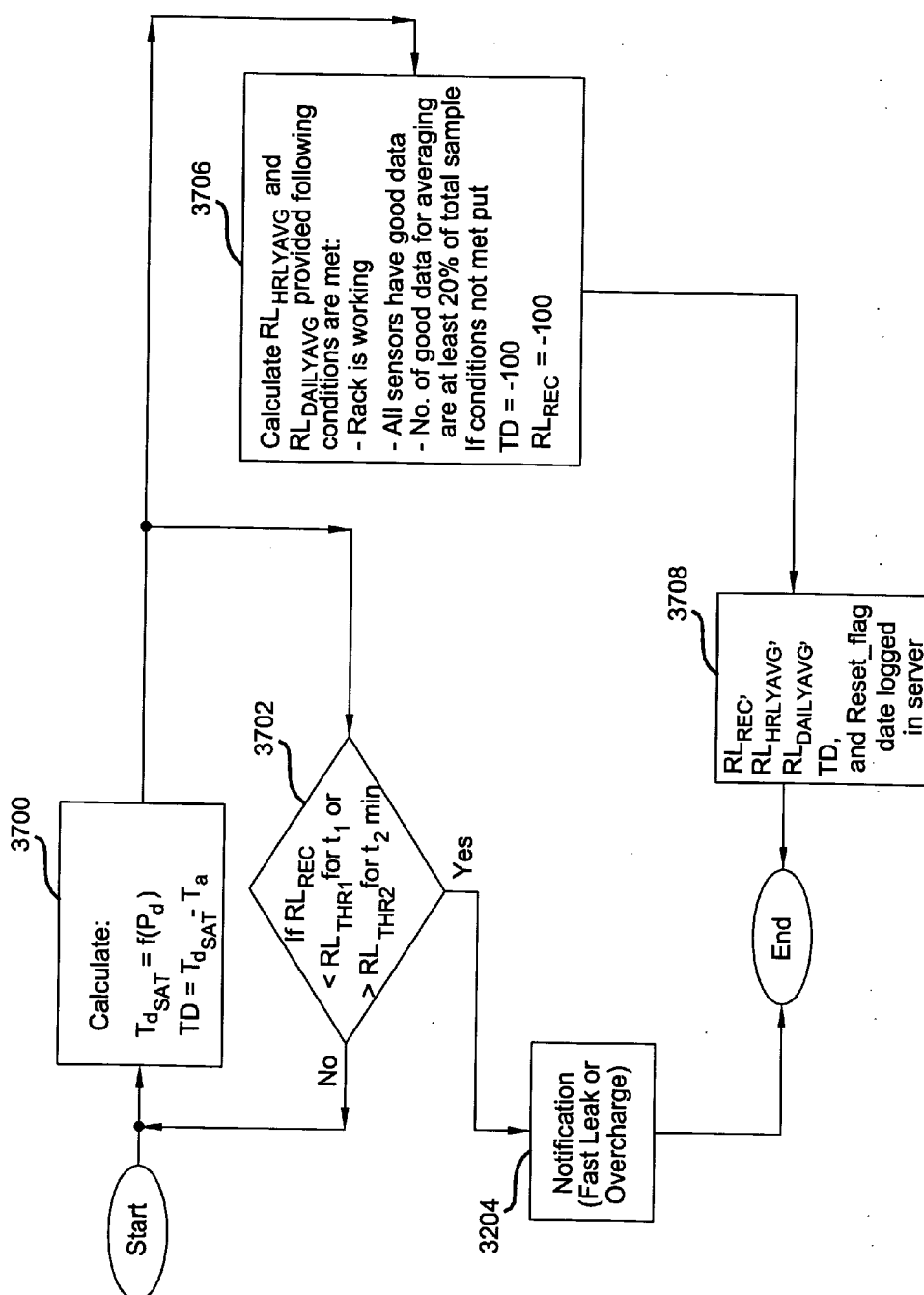


FIG 37

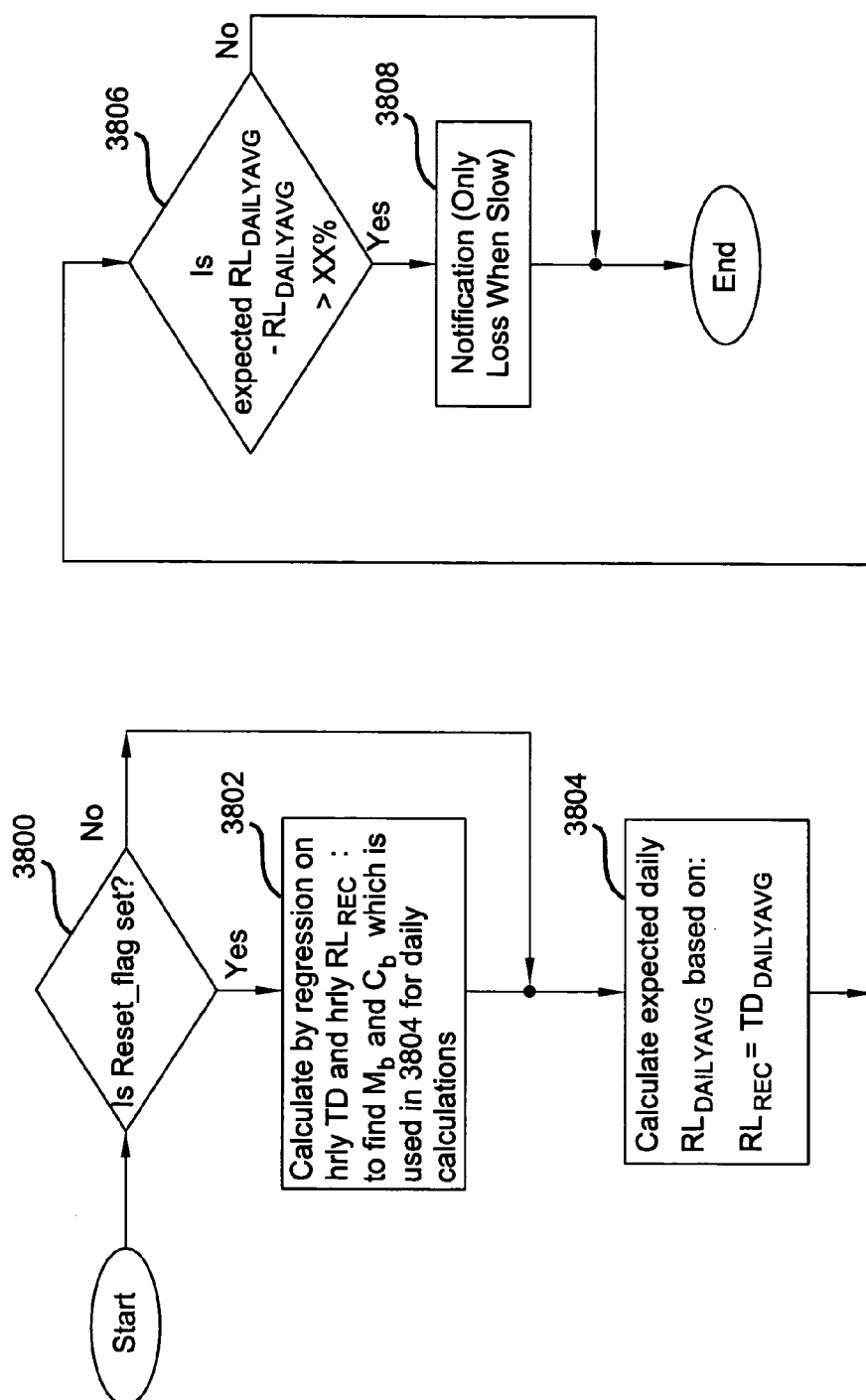


FIG 38

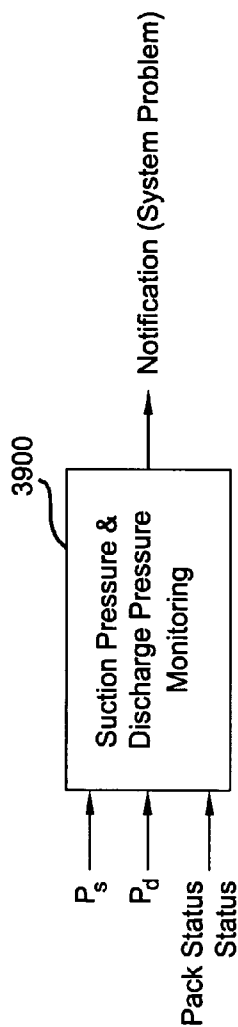


FIG 39

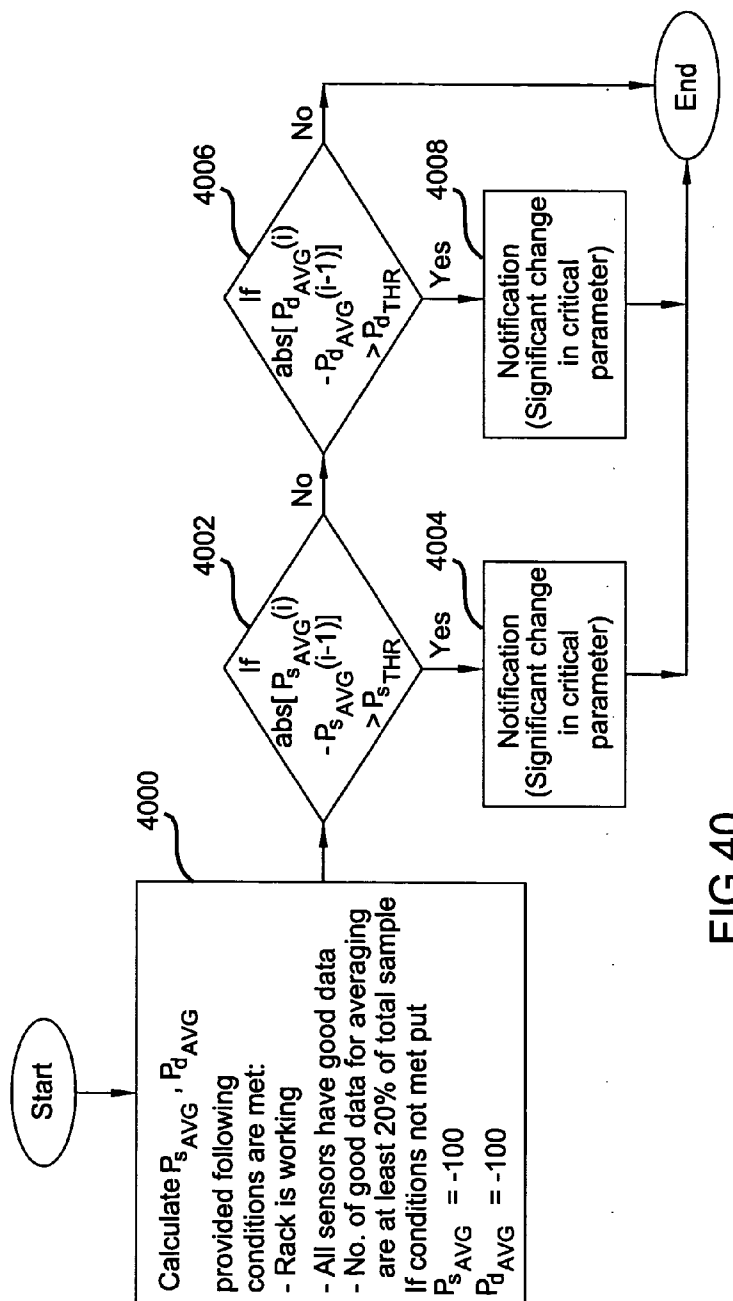


FIG 40

PREDICTING MAINTENANCE IN A REFRIGERATION SYSTEM

FIELD

[0001] The present teachings relate to refrigeration systems and, more particularly, to predicting maintenance in a refrigeration system.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Produced food travels from processing plants to retailers, where the food product remains on display case shelves for extended periods of time. In general, the display case shelves are part of a refrigeration system for storing the food product. In the interest of efficiency, retailers attempt to maximize the shelf-life of the stored food product while maintaining awareness of food product quality and safety issues.

[0003] The refrigeration system plays a key role in controlling the quality and safety of the food product. Thus, any breakdown in the refrigeration system or variation in performance of the refrigeration system can cause food quality and safety issues. Thus, it is important for the retailer to monitor and maintain the equipment of the refrigeration system to ensure its operation at expected levels.

[0004] Refrigeration systems generally require a significant amount of energy to operate. The energy requirements are thus a significant cost to food product retailers, especially when compounding the energy uses across multiple retail locations. As a result, it is in the best interest of food retailers to closely monitor the performance of the refrigeration systems to maximize their efficiency, thereby reducing operational costs.

[0005] Monitoring refrigeration system performance, maintenance and energy consumption are tedious and time-consuming operations and are undesirable for retailers to perform independently. Generally speaking, retailers lack the expertise to accurately analyze time and temperature data and relate that data to food product quality and safety, as well as the expertise to monitor the refrigeration system for performance, maintenance and efficiency. Further, a typical food retailer includes a plurality of retail locations spanning a large area. Monitoring each of the retail locations on an individual basis is inefficient and often results in redundancies.

SUMMARY

[0006] A method for predicting maintenance in a refrigeration system is provided. The method comprises occurrences of a compressor operating event and calculating a cumulative total of the compressor operating events. The method also comprises comparing the cumulative total with an operating threshold and estimating a time period until the cumulative total exceeds the operating threshold.

[0007] In other features, the method comprises determining when maintenance will be required based on the estimating. In still other features, a controller that executes the method is provided. In still other features, a computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method is provided.

[0008] Further areas of applicability of the present teachings will become apparent from the detailed description

provided hereinafter. It should be understood that the detailed description and specific examples are intended for purposes of illustration only and are not intended to limit the scope of the teachings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The present teachings will become more fully understood from the detailed description and the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of an exemplary refrigeration system;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a schematic overview of a system for remotely monitoring and evaluating a remote location;

[0012] FIG. 3 is a simplified schematic illustration of circuit piping of the refrigeration system of FIG. 1 illustrating measurement sensors;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a simplified schematic illustration of loop piping of the refrigeration system of FIG. 1 illustrating measurement sensors;

[0014] FIG. 5 is a flowchart illustrating a signal conversion and validation algorithm according to the present teachings;

[0015] FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters for the signal conversion and validation algorithm of FIG. 5;

[0016] FIG. 7 is a flowchart illustrating a refrigerant properties from temperature (RPFT) algorithm;

[0017] FIG. 8 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters for the RPFT algorithm;

[0018] FIG. 9 is a flowchart illustrating a refrigerant properties from pressure (RPPF) algorithm;

[0019] FIG. 10 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters for the RPPF algorithm;

[0020] FIG. 11 is a graph illustrating pattern bands of the pattern recognition algorithm

[0021] FIG. 12 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters of a pattern analyzer;

[0022] FIG. 13 is a flowchart illustrating a pattern recognition algorithm;

[0023] FIG. 14 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters of a message algorithm;

[0024] FIG. 15 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters of a recurring notice/alarm algorithm;

[0025] FIG. 16 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters of a condenser performance monitor for a non-variable speed drive (non-VSD) condenser;

[0026] FIG. 17 is a flowchart illustrating a condenser performance algorithm for the non-VSD condenser;

[0027] FIG. 18 is a block diagram illustrating configuration and output parameters of a condenser performance monitor for a variable speed drive (VSD) condenser;

[0028] FIG. 19 is a flowchart illustrating a condenser performance algorithm for the VSD condenser;

[0029] FIG. 20 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a condenser performance degradation algorithm;

[0030] FIG. 21 is a flowchart illustrating the condenser performance degradation algorithm;

[0031] FIG. 22 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a compressor proofing algorithm;

[0032] FIG. 23 is a flowchart illustrating the compressor proofing algorithm;

[0033] FIG. 24 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a compressor performance monitoring algorithm;

[0034] FIG. 25 is a flowchart illustrating the compressor performance monitoring algorithm;

[0035] FIG. 26 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a compressor high discharge temperature monitoring algorithm;

[0036] FIG. 27 is a flowchart illustrating the compressor high discharge temperature monitoring algorithm;

[0037] FIG. 28 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a return gas and flood-back monitoring algorithm;

[0038] FIG. 29 is a flowchart illustrating the return gas and flood-back monitoring algorithm;

[0039] FIG. 30 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a contactor maintenance algorithm;

[0040] FIG. 31 is a flowchart illustrating the contactor maintenance algorithm;

[0041] FIG. 32 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a contactor excessive cycling algorithm;

[0042] FIG. 33 is a flowchart illustrating the contactor excessive cycling algorithm;

[0043] FIG. 34 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a contactor maintenance algorithm;

[0044] FIG. 35 is a flowchart illustrating the contactor maintenance algorithm;

[0045] FIG. 36 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a refrigerant charge monitoring algorithm;

[0046] FIG. 37 is a flowchart illustrating the refrigerant charge monitoring algorithm;

[0047] FIG. 38 is a flowchart illustrating further details of the refrigerant charge monitoring algorithm;

[0048] FIG. 39 is a block diagram illustrating inputs and outputs of a suction and discharge pressure monitoring algorithm; and

[0049] FIG. 40 is a flowchart illustrating the suction and discharge pressure monitoring algorithm.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0050] The following description is merely exemplary in nature and is in no way intended to limit the present teachings, applications, or uses. As used herein, computer-readable medium refers to any medium capable of storing data that may be received by a computer. Computer-readable medium may include, but is not limited to, a CD-ROM, a floppy disk, a magnetic tape, other magnetic medium capable of storing data, memory, RAM, ROM, PROM,

EPROM, EEPROM, flash memory, punch cards, dip switches, or any other medium capable of storing data for a computer.

[0051] With reference to FIG. 1, an exemplary refrigeration system 100 includes a plurality of refrigerated food storage cases 102. The refrigeration system 100 includes a plurality of compressors 104 piped together with a common suction manifold 106 and a discharge header 108 all positioned within a compressor rack 110. A discharge output 112 of each compressor 102 includes a respective temperature sensor 114. An input 116 to the suction manifold 106 includes both a pressure sensor 118 and a temperature sensor 120. Further, a discharge outlet 122 of the discharge header 108 includes an associated pressure sensor 124. As described in further detail hereinbelow, the various sensors are implemented for evaluating maintenance requirements.

[0052] The compressor rack 110 compresses refrigerant vapor that is delivered to a condenser 126 where the refrigerant vapor is liquefied at high pressure. Condenser fans 127 are associated with the condenser 126 to enable improved heat transfer from the condenser 126. The condenser 126 includes an associated ambient temperature sensor 128 and an outlet pressure sensor 130. This high-pressure liquid refrigerant is delivered to the plurality of refrigeration cases 102 by way of piping 132. Each refrigeration case 102 is arranged in separate circuits consisting of a plurality of refrigeration cases 102 that operate within a certain temperature range. FIG. 1 illustrates four (4) circuits labeled circuit A, circuit B, circuit C and circuit D. Each circuit is shown consisting of four (4) refrigeration cases 102. However, those skilled in the art will recognize that any number of circuits, as well as any number of refrigeration cases 102 may be employed within a circuit. As indicated, each circuit will generally operate within a certain temperature range. For example, circuit A may be for frozen food, circuit B may be for dairy, circuit C may be for meat, etc.

[0053] Because the temperature requirement is different for each circuit, each circuit includes a pressure regulator 134 that acts to control the evaporator pressure and, hence, the temperature of the refrigerated space in the refrigeration cases 102. The pressure regulators 134 can be electronically or mechanically controlled. Each refrigeration case 102 also includes its own evaporator 136 and its own expansion valve 138 that may be either a mechanical or an electronic valve for controlling the superheat of the refrigerant. In this regard, refrigerant is delivered by piping to the evaporator 136 in each refrigeration case 102.

[0054] The refrigerant passes through the expansion valve 138 where a pressure drop causes the high pressure liquid refrigerant to achieve a lower pressure combination of liquid and vapor. As hot air from the refrigeration case 102 moves across the evaporator 136, the low pressure liquid turns into gas. This low pressure gas is delivered to the pressure regulator 134 associated with that particular circuit. At the pressure regulator 134, the pressure is dropped as the gas returns to the compressor rack 110. At the compressor rack 110, the low pressure gas is again compressed to a high pressure gas, which is delivered to the condenser 126, which creates a high pressure liquid to supply to the expansion valve 138 and start the refrigeration cycle again.

[0055] A main refrigeration controller 140 is used and configured or programmed to control the operation of the

refrigeration system **100**. The refrigeration controller **140** is preferably an Einstein Area Controller offered by CPC, Inc. of Atlanta, Ga., or any other type of programmable controller that may be programmed, as discussed herein. The refrigeration controller **140** controls the bank of compressors **104** in the compressor rack **110**, via an input/output module **142**. The input/output module **142** has relay switches to turn the compressors **104** on an off to provide the desired suction pressure.

[0056] A separate case controller (not shown), such as a CC-100 case controller, also offered by CPC, Inc. of Atlanta, Ga. may be used to control the superheat of the refrigerant to each refrigeration case **102**, via an electronic expansion valve in each refrigeration case **102** by way of a communication network or bus. Alternatively, a mechanical expansion valve may be used in place of the separate case controller. Should separate case controllers be utilized, the main refrigeration controller **140** may be used to configure each separate case controller, also via the communication bus. The communication bus may either be a RS-485 communication bus or a LonWorks Echelon bus that enables the main refrigeration controller **140** and the separate case controllers to receive information from each refrigeration case **102**.

[0057] Each refrigeration case **102** may have a temperature sensor **146** associated therewith, as shown for circuit B. The temperature sensor **146** can be electronically or wirelessly connected to the controller **140** or the expansion valve for the refrigeration case **102**. Each refrigeration case **102** in the circuit B may have a separate temperature sensor **146** to take average/min/max temperatures or a single temperature sensor **146** in one refrigeration case **102** within circuit B may be used to control each refrigeration case **102** in circuit B because all of the refrigeration cases **102** in a given circuit operate at substantially the same temperature range. These temperature inputs are preferably provided to the analog input board **142**, which returns the information to the main refrigeration controller **140** via the communication bus.

[0058] Additionally, further sensors are provided and correspond with each component of the refrigeration system and are in communication with the refrigeration controller **140**. Energy sensors **150** are associated with the compressors **104** and the condenser **126** of the refrigeration system **100**. The energy sensors **150** monitor energy consumption of their respective components and relay that information to the controller **140**.

[0059] Referring now to FIG. 2, data acquisition and analytical algorithms may reside in one or more layers. The lowest layer is a device layer that includes hardware including, but not limited to, I/O boards that collect signals and may even process some signals. A system layer includes controllers such as the refrigeration controller **140** and case controllers **141**. The system layer processes algorithms that control the system components. A facility layer includes a site-based controller **161** that integrates and manages all of the sub-controllers. The site-based controller **161** is a master controller that manages communications to/from the facility.

[0060] The highest layer is an enterprise layer that manages information across all facilities and exists within a remote network or processing center **160**. It is anticipated that the remote processing center **160** can be either in the same location (e.g., food product retailer) as the refrigeration

system **100** or can be a centralized processing center that monitors the refrigeration systems of several remote locations. The refrigeration controller **140** and case controllers **141** initially communicate with the site-based controller **161** via a serial connection, Ethernet, or other suitable network connection. The site-based controller **161** communicates with the processing center **160** via a modem, Ethernet, internet (i.e., TCP/IP) or other suitable network connection.

[0061] The processing center **160** collects data from the refrigeration controller **140**, the case controllers **141** and the various sensors associated with the refrigeration system **100**. For example, the processing center **160** collects information such as compressor, flow regulator and expansion valve set points from the refrigeration controller **140**. Data such as pressure and temperature values at various points along the refrigeration circuit are provided by the various sensors via the refrigeration controller **140**.

[0062] Referring now to FIGS. 3 and 4, for each refrigeration circuit and loop of the refrigeration system **100**, several calculations are required to calculate superheat, saturation properties and other values used in the herein-described algorithms. These measurements include: ambient temperature (T_a), discharge pressure (P_d), condenser pressure (P_c), suction temperature (T_s), suction pressure (P_s), refrigeration level (RL), compressor discharge temperature (T_d), rack current load (I_{cmp}), condenser current load (I_{cnd}) and compressor run status. Other accessible controller parameters will be used as necessary. For example, a power sensor can monitor the power consumption of the compressor racks and the condenser. Besides the sensors described above, suction temperature sensors **115** monitor T_s of the individual compressors **104** in a rack and a rack current sensor **150** monitors I_{cmp} of a rack. The pressure sensor **124** monitors P_d and a current sensor **127** monitors I_{cnd} . Multiple temperature sensors **129** monitor a return temperature (T_c) for each circuit.

[0063] The analytical algorithms include common and application algorithms that are preferably provided in the form of software modules. The application algorithms, supported by the common algorithms, predict maintenance requirements for the various components of the refrigeration system **100** and generate notifications that include notices, warnings and alarms. Notices are the lowest of the notifications and simply notify the service provider that something out of the ordinary is happening in the system. A notification does not yet warrant dispatch of a service technician to the facility. Warnings are an intermediate level of the notifications and inform the service provider that a problem is identified which is serious enough to be checked by a technician within a predetermined time period (e.g., 1 month). A warning does not indicate an emergency situation. An alarm is the highest of the notifications and warrants immediate attention by a service technician.

[0064] The common algorithms include signal conversion and validation, saturated refrigerant properties, pattern analyzer, watchdog message and recurring notice or alarm message. The application algorithms include condenser performance management (fan loss and dirty condenser), compressor proofing, compressor fault detection, return gas superheat monitoring, compressor contact monitoring, compressor run-time monitoring, refrigerant loss detection and suction/discharge pressure monitoring. Each is discussed in

detail below. The algorithms can be processed locally using the refrigeration controller **140** or remotely at the remote processing center **160**.

[0065] Referring now to FIGS. **5** through **15**, the common algorithms will be described in detail. With particular reference to FIGS. **5** and **6**, the signal conversion and validation (SCV) algorithm processes measurement signals from the various sensors. The SCV algorithm determines the value of a particular signal and up to three different qualities including whether the signal is within a useful range, whether the signal changes over time and/or whether the actual input signal from the sensor is valid.

[0066] Referring now to FIG. **5**, in step **500**, the input registers read the measurement signal of a particular sensor. In step **502**, it is determined whether the input signal is within a range that is particular to the type of measurement. If the input signal is within range, the SCV algorithm continues in step **504**. If the input signal is not within the range an invalid data range flag is set in step **506** and the SCV algorithm continues in step **508**. In step **504**, it is determined whether there is a change (Δ) in the signal within a threshold time (t_{thresh}). If there is no change in the signal it is deemed static. In this case, a static data value flag is set in step **510** and the SCV algorithm continues in step **508**. If there is a change in the signal a valid data value flag is set in step **512** and the SCV algorithm continues in step **508**.

[0067] In step **508**, the signal is converted to provide finished data. More particularly, the signal is generally provided as a voltage. The voltage corresponds to a particular value (e.g., temperature, pressure, current, etc.). Generally, the signal is converted by multiplying the voltage value by a conversion constant (e.g., ° C./V, kPa/V, A/V, etc.). In step **514**, the output registers pass the data value and validation flags and control ends.

[0068] Referring now to FIG. **6**, a block diagram schematically illustrates an SCV block **600**. A measured variable **602** is shown as the input signal. The input signal is provided by the instruments or sensors. Configuration parameters **604** are provided and include L_o and H_i range values, a time Δ , a signal Δ and an input type. The configuration parameters **604** are specific to each signal and each application. Output parameters **606** are output by the SCV block **600** and include the data value, bad signal flag, out of range flag and static value flag. In other words, the output parameters **606** are the finished data and data quality parameters associated with the measured variable.

[0069] Referring now to FIGS. **7** through **10**, refrigeration property algorithms will be described in detail. The refrigeration property algorithms provide the saturation pressure (P_{SAT}), density and enthalpy based on temperature. The refrigeration property algorithms further provide saturation temperature (T_{SAT}) based on pressure. Each algorithm incorporates thermal property curves for common refrigerant types including, but not limited to, R22, R401a (MP39), R402a (HP80), R404a (HP62), R409a and R507c.

[0070] With particular reference to FIG. **7**, a refrigerant properties from temperature (RPFT) algorithm is shown. In step **700**, the temperature and refrigerant type are input. In step **702**, it is determined whether the refrigerant is saturated liquid based on the temperature. If the refrigerant is in the saturated liquid state, the RPFT algorithm continues in step

704. If the refrigerant is not in the saturated liquid state, the RPFT algorithm continues in step **706**. In step **704**, the RPFT algorithm selects the saturated liquid curve from the thermal property curves for the particular refrigerant type and continues in step **708**.

[0071] In step **706**, it is determined whether the refrigerant is in a saturated vapor state. If the refrigerant is in the saturated vapor state, the RPFT algorithm continues in step **710**. If the refrigerant is not in the saturated vapor state, the RPFT algorithm continues in step **712**. In step **712**, the data values are cleared, flags are set and the RPFT algorithm continues in step **714**. In step **710**, the RPFT algorithm selects the saturated vapor curve from the thermal property curves for the particular refrigerant type and continues in step **708**. In step **708**, data values for the refrigerant are determined. The data values include pressure, density and enthalpy. In step **714**, the RPFT algorithm outputs the data values and flags.

[0072] Referring now to FIG. **8**, a block diagram schematically illustrates an RPFT block **800**. A measured variable **802** is shown as the temperature. The temperature is provided by the instruments or sensors. Configuration parameters **804** are provided and include the particular refrigerant type. Output parameters **806** are output by the RPFT block **800** and include the pressure, enthalpy, density and data quality flag.

[0073] With particular reference to FIG. **9** a refrigerant properties from pressure (RPFP) algorithm is shown. In step **900**, the temperature and refrigerant type are input. In step **902**, it is determined whether the refrigerant is saturated liquid based on the pressure. If the refrigerant is in the saturated liquid state, the RPFP algorithm continues in step **904**. If the refrigerant is not in the saturated liquid state, the RPFP algorithm continues in step **906**. In step **904**, the RPFP algorithm selects the saturated liquid curve from the thermal property curves for the particular refrigerant type and continues in step **908**.

[0074] In step **906**, it is determined whether the refrigerant is in a saturated vapor state. If the refrigerant is in the saturated vapor state, the RPFP algorithm continues in step **910**. If the refrigerant is not in the saturated vapor state, the RPFP algorithm continues in step **912**. In step **912**, the data values are cleared, flags are set and the RPFP algorithm continues in step **914**. In step **910**, the RPFP algorithm selects the saturated vapor curve from the thermal property curves for the particular refrigerant type and continues in step **908**. In step **908**, the temperature of the refrigerant is determined. In step **914**, the RPFP algorithm outputs the temperature and flags.

[0075] Referring now to FIG. **10**, a block diagram schematically illustrates an RPFP block **1000**. A measured variable **1002** is shown as the pressure. The pressure is provided by the instruments or sensors. Configuration parameters **1004** are provided and include the particular refrigerant type. Output parameters **1006** are output by the RPFP block **1000** and include the temperature and data quality flag.

[0076] Referring now to FIGS. **11** through **13**, the data pattern recognition algorithm or pattern analyzer will be described in detail. The pattern analyzer monitors operating parameter inputs such as case temperature (T_{CASE}), product temperature (T_{PROD}), P_s and P_d and includes a data table

(see FIG. 11) having multiple bands whose upper and lower limits are defined by configuration parameters. A particular input is measured at a configured frequency (e.g., every minute, hour, day, etc.). As the input value changes, the pattern analyzer determines within which band the value lies and increments a counter for that band. After the input has been monitored for a specified time period (e.g., a day, a week, a month, etc.) notifications are generated based on the band populations. The bands are defined by various boundaries including a high positive (PP) boundary, a positive (P) boundary, a zero (Z) boundary, a minus (M) boundary and a high minus (MM) boundary. The number of bands and the boundaries thereof are determined based on the particular refrigeration system operating parameter to be monitored. If the population of a particular band exceeds a notification limit, a corresponding notification is generated.

[0077] Referring now to FIG. 12, a pattern analyzer block 1200 receives measured variables 1202, configuration parameters 1204 and generates output parameters 1206 based thereon. The measured variables 1202 include an input (e.g., T_{CASE} , T_{PROD} , P_S and P_d). The configuration parameters 1204 include a data sample timer and data pattern zone information. The data sample timer includes a duration, an interval and a frequency. The data pattern zone information defines the bands and which bands are to be enabled. For example, the data pattern zone information provides the boundary values (e.g., PP) band enablement (e.g., PPen), band value (e.g., PPband) and notification limit (e.g., PPpct).

[0078] Referring now to FIG. 13, input registers are set for measurement and start trigger in step 1300. In step 1302, the algorithm determines whether the start trigger is present. If the start trigger is not present, the algorithm loops back to step 1300. If the start trigger is present, the pattern table is defined in step 1304 based on the data pattern bands. In step 1306, the pattern table is cleared. In step 1308, the measurement is read and the measurement data is assigned to the pattern table in step 1310.

[0079] In step 1312, the algorithm determines whether the duration has expired. If the duration has not yet expired, the algorithm waits for the defined interval in step 1314 and loops back to step 1308. If the duration has expired, the algorithm populates the output table in step 1316. In step 1318, the algorithm determines whether the results are normal. In other words, the algorithm determines whether the population of each band is below the notification limit for that band. If the results are normal, notifications are cleared in step 1320 and the algorithm ends. If the results are not normal, the algorithm determines whether to generate a notice, a warning, or an alarm in step 1322. In step 1324, the notification(s) is/are generated and the algorithm ends.

[0080] Referring now to FIG. 14, a block diagram schematically illustrates the watchdog message algorithm, which includes a message generator 1400, configuration parameters 1402 and output parameters 1404. In accordance with the watchdog message algorithm, the site-based controller 161 periodically reports its health (i.e., operating condition) to the remainder of the network. The site-based controller generates a test message that is periodically broadcast. The time and frequency of the message is configured by setting the time of the first message and the number of times per day the test message is to be broadcast. Other components of the

network (e.g., the refrigeration controller 140, the processing center 160 and the case controllers) periodically receive the test message. If the test message is not received by one or more of the other network components, a controller communication fault is indicated.

[0081] Referring now to FIG. 15, a block diagram schematically illustrates the recurring notification algorithm. The recurring notification algorithm monitors the state of signals generated by the various algorithms described herein. Some signals remain in the notification state for a protracted period of time until the corresponding issue is resolved. As a result, a notification message that is initially generated as the initial notification occurs may be overlooked later. The recurring notification algorithm generates the notification message at a configured frequency. The notification message is continuously regenerated until the alarm condition is resolved.

[0082] The recurring notification algorithm includes a notification message generator 1500, configuration parameters 1502, input parameters 1504 and output parameters 1506. The configuration parameters 1502 include message frequency. The input 1504 includes a notification message and the output parameters 1506 include a regenerated notification message. The notification generator 1500 regenerates the input notification message at the indicated frequency. Once the notification condition is resolved, the input 1504 will indicate as such and regeneration of the notification message terminates.

[0083] Referring now to FIGS. 16 through 40, the application algorithms will be described in detail. With particular reference to FIGS. 16 through 21, condenser performance degrades due to gradual buildup of dirt and debris on the condenser coil and condenser fan failures. The condenser performance management includes a fan loss algorithm and a dirty condenser algorithm to detect either of these conditions.

[0084] Referring now to FIGS. 16 and 17, the fan loss algorithm for a condenser fan without a variable speed drive (VSD) will be described. A block diagram illustrates a fan loss block 1600 that receives inputs of total condenser fan current (I_{CND}), a fan call status, a fan current for each condenser fan ($I_{EACHFAN}$) and a fan current measurement accuracy ($\delta I_{FANCURRENT}$). The fan call status is a flag that indicates whether a fan has been commanded to turn on. The fan current measurement accuracy is assumed to be approximately 10% of $I_{EACHFAN}$ if it is otherwise unavailable. The fan loss block 1600 processes the inputs and can generate a notification if the algorithm deems a fan is not functioning.

[0085] Referring to FIG. 17, the condenser control requests that a fan come on in step 1700. In step 1702, the algorithm determines whether the incremental change in I_{CND} is greater than or equal to the difference of $I_{EACHFAN}$ and $\delta I_{FANCURRENT}$. If the incremental change is not greater than or equal to the difference, the algorithm generates a fan loss notification in step 1704 and the algorithm ends. If the incremental change is greater than or equal to the difference, the algorithm loops back to step 1700.

[0086] Referring now to FIGS. 18 and 19, the fan loss algorithm for a condenser fan with a VSD will be described. A block diagram illustrates a fan loss block 1800 that receives inputs of I_{CND} , the number of fans ON (N), VSD speed (RPM) or output %, $I_{EACHFAN}$ and $\delta I_{FANCURRENT}$.

The VSD RPM or output % is provided by a motor control algorithm. The fan loss block **1600** processes the inputs and can generate a notification if the algorithm deems a fan is not functioning.

[0087] Referring to FIG. 19, the condenser control calculates and expected current (I_{EXP}) in step **1900** based on the following formula:

$$I_{EXP} = N \times I_{EACHFAN} \times (RPM/100)^3$$

In step **1902**, the algorithm determines whether I_{CND} is greater than or equal to the difference of I_{EXP} and $\delta I_{FAN-CURRENT}$. If the incremental change is not greater than or equal to the difference, the algorithm generates a fan loss notification in step **1904** and the algorithm ends. If the incremental change is greater than or equal to the difference, the algorithm loops back to step **1900**.

[0088] Referring specifically to FIGS. 20 and 21, the dirty condenser algorithm will be explained in further detail. Condenser performance degrades due to dirt and debris. The dirty condenser algorithm calculates an overall condenser performance factor (U) for the condenser which corresponds to a thermal efficiency of the condenser. Hourly and daily averages are calculated and stored. A notification is generated based on a drop in the U averages. A condenser performance degradation block **2000** receives inputs including I_{CND} , I_{CMP} , P_d , T_a , refrigerant type and a reset flag. The condenser performance degradation block generates an hourly U average ($U_{HRLYAVG}$), a daily U average ($U_{DAI-LYAVG}$) and a reset flag time, based on the inputs. Whenever the condenser is cleaned, the field technician resets the algorithm and a benchmark U is created by averaging seven days of hourly data.

[0089] A condenser performance degradation analysis block **2002** generates a notification based on $U_{HRLYAVG}$, $U_{DAI-LYAVG}$ and the reset time flag. Referring now to FIG. 21, the algorithm calculates T_{DSAT} based on P_d in step **2100**. In step **2102**, the algorithm calculates U based on the following equation:

$$U = \frac{I_{CMP}}{(I_{CND} + I_{onefan})(T_{DSAT} - T_a)}$$

To avoid an error due to division by 0, a small nominal value I_{onefan} is added to the denominator. In this way, even when the condenser is off, and I_{CND} is 0, the equation does not return an error. I_{onefan} corresponds to the normal current of one fan. In step **2104**, the algorithm updates the hourly and daily averages provided that I_{CMP} and I_{CND} are both greater than 0, all sensors are functioning properly and the number of good data for sampling make up at least 20% of the total data sample. If these conditions are not met, the algorithm sets $U = -1$. The above calculation is based on condenser and compressor current. As can be appreciated, condenser and compressor power, as indicated by a power meter, or PID control signal data may also be used. PID control signal refers to a control signal that directs the component to operate at a percentage of its maximum capacity. A PID percentage value may be used in place of either the compressor or condenser current. As can be appreciated, any suitable indication of compressor or condenser power consumption may be used.

[0090] In step **2106**, the algorithm logs $U_{HRLYAVG}$, $U_{DAI-LYAVG}$ and the reset time flag into memory. In step **2108**, the algorithm determine whether each of the averages have dropped by a threshold percentage (XX%) as compared to respective benchmarks. If the averages have not dropped by XX%, the algorithm loops back to step **2100**. If the averages have dropped by XX%, the algorithm generates a notification in step **2110**.

[0091] Referring now to FIGS. 22 and 23, the compressor proofing algorithm monitors T_d and the ON/OFF status of the compressor. When the compressor is turned ON, T_d should rise by at least 20° F. A compressor proofing block **2200** receives T_d and the ON/OFF status as inputs. The compressor proofing block **2200** processes the inputs and generates a notification if needed. In step **2300**, the algorithm determines whether T_d has increased by at least 20° F. after the status has changed from OFF to ON. If T_d has increased by at least 20° F., the algorithm loops back. If T_d has not increased by at least 20° F., a notification is generated in step **2302**.

[0092] High compressor discharge temperatures result in lubricant breakdown, worn rings, and acid formation, all of which shorten the compressor lifespan. This condition can indicate a variety of problems including, but not limited to, damaged compressor valves, partial motor winding shorts, excess compressor wear, piston failure and high compression ratios. High compression ratios can be caused by either low suction pressure, high head pressure or a combination of the two. The higher the compression ratio, the higher the discharge temperature. This is due to heat of compression generated when the gasses are compressed through a greater pressure range.

[0093] High discharge temperatures (e.g., >300 F) cause oil break-down. Although high discharge temperatures typically occur in summer conditions (i.e., when the outdoor temperature is high and compressor has some problem), high discharge temperatures can occur in low ambient conditions, when compressor has some problem. Although the discharge temperature may not be high enough to cause oil break-down, it may still be higher than desired. Running compressor at relatively higher discharge temperatures indicates inefficient operation and the compressor may consume more energy than required. Similarly, lower than expected discharge temperatures may indicate flood-back.

[0094] The algorithms detect such temperature conditions by calculating isentropic efficiency (N_{CMP}) for the compressor. A lower efficiency indicates a compressor problem and an efficiency close to 100% indicates a flood-back condition.

[0095] Referring now to FIGS. 24 and 25, the compressor fault detection algorithm will be discussed in detail. A compressor performance monitoring block **2400** receives P_s , T_s , P_d , T_d , compressor ON/OFF status and refrigerant type as inputs. The compressor performance monitoring block **2400** generates N_{CMP} and a notification based on the inputs. A compressor performance analysis block selectively generates a notification based on a daily average of N_{CMP} .

[0096] With particular reference to FIG. 25, the algorithm calculates suction entropy (s_{SUC}) and suction enthalpy (h_{SUC}) based on T_s and P_s , intake enthalpy (h_{ID}) based on s_{SUC} and discharge enthalpy (h_{DIS}) based on T_d and P_d in

step **2500**. In step **2502**, control calculates N_{CMP} based on the following equation:

$$N_{CMP} = (h_{ID} - h_{SUC}) / (h_{DIS} - h_{SUC}) * 100$$

In step **2504**, the algorithm determines whether N_{CMP} is less than a first threshold (THR_1) for a threshold time (t_{THRESH}) and whether N_{CMP} is greater than a second threshold (THR_2) for t_{THRESH} . If N_{CMP} is not less than THR_1 for t_{THRESH} and is not greater than THR_2 for t_{THRESH} , the algorithm continues in step **2508**. If N_{CMP} is less than THR_1 for t_{THRESH} and is greater than THR_2 for t_{THRESH} , the algorithm issues a compressor performance effected notification in step **2506** and ends. The thresholds may be predetermined and based on ideal suction enthalpy, ideal intake enthalpy and/or ideal discharge enthalpy. Further, THR_1 may be 50%. An N_{CMP} of less than 50% may indicate a refrigeration system malfunction. THR_2 may be 90%. An N_{CMP} of more than 90% may indicate a flood back condition.

[0097] In step **2508**, the algorithm calculates a daily average of N_{CMP} (N_{CMPDA}) provided that the compressor proof has not failed, all sensors are providing valid data and the number of good data samples are at least 20% of the total samples. If these conditions are not met, N_{CMPDA} is set equal to -1. In step **2510**, the algorithm determines whether N_{CMPDA} has changed by a threshold percent (PCT_{THR}) as compared to a benchmark. If N_{CMPDA} has not changed by PCT_{THR} , the algorithm loops back to step **2500**. If N_{CMPDA} has not changed by PCT_{THR} , the algorithm ends. If N_{CMPDA} has changed by PCT_{THR} , the algorithm initiates a compressor performance effected notification in step **2512** and the algorithm ends.

[0098] Referring now to FIGS. 26 and 27, a high T_d monitoring algorithm will be described in detail. The high T_d monitoring algorithm generates notifications for discharge temperatures that can result in oil break-down. In general, the algorithm monitors T_d and determines whether the compressor is operating properly based thereon. T_d reflects the latent heat absorbed in the evaporator, evaporator superheat, suction line heat gain, heat of compression, and compressor motor-generated heat. All of this heat is accumulated at the compressor discharge and must be removed. High compressor T_d 's result in lubricant breakdown, worn rings, and acid formation, all of which shorten the compressor lifespan. This condition can indicate a variety of problems including, but not limited to damaged compressor valves, partial motor winding shorts, excess compressor wear, piston failure and high compression ratios. High compression ratios can be caused by either low P_s , high head pressure, or a combination of the two. The higher the compression ratio, the higher the T_d will be at the compressor. This is due to heat of compression generated when the gasses are compressed through a greater pressure range.

[0099] Referring now to FIG. 26, a T_d monitoring block **2600** receives T_d and compressor ON/OFF status as inputs. The T_d monitoring block **2600** processes the inputs and selectively generates an unacceptable T_d notification. Referring now to FIG. 27, the algorithm determines whether T_d is greater than a threshold temperature (T_{THR}) for a threshold time (t_{THRESH}). If T_d is not greater than T_{THR} for t_{THRESH} , the algorithm loops back. If T_d is greater than T_{THR} for t_{THRESH} , the algorithm generates an unacceptable discharge temperature notification in step **2702** and the algorithm ends.

[0100] Referring now to FIGS. 28 and 29, the return gas superheat monitoring algorithm will be described in further

detail. Liquid flood-back is a condition that occurs while the compressor is running. Depending on the severity of this condition, liquid refrigerant will enter the compressor in sufficient quantities to cause a mechanical failure. More specifically, liquid refrigerant enters the compressor and dilutes the oil in either the cylinder bores or the crankcase, which supplies oil to the shaft bearing surfaces and connecting rods. Excessive flood back (or slugging) results in scoring the rods, pistons, or shafts.

[0101] This failure mode results from the heavy load induced on the compressor and the lack of lubrication caused by liquid refrigerant diluting the oil. As the liquid refrigerant drops to the bottom of the shell, it dilutes the oil, reducing its lubricating capability. This inadequate mixture is then picked up by the oil pump and supplied to the bearing surfaces for lubrication. Under these conditions, the connecting rods and crankshaft bearing surfaces will score, wear, and eventually seize up when the oil film is completely washed away by the liquid refrigerant. There will likely be copper plating, carbonized oil, and aluminum deposits on compressor components resulting from the extreme heat of friction.

[0102] Some common causes of refrigerant flood back include, but are not limited to inadequate evaporator superheat, refrigerant over-charge, reduced air flow over the evaporator coil and improper metering device (oversized). The return gas superheat monitoring algorithm is designed to generate a notification when liquid reaches the compressor. Additionally, the algorithm also watches the return gas temperature and superheat for the first sign of a flood back problem even if the liquid does not reach the compressor. Also, the return gas temperatures are monitored and a notification is generated upon a rise in gas temperature. Rise in gas temperature may indicate improper settings.

[0103] Referring now to FIG. 28, a return gas and flood back monitoring block **2800**, receives T_s , P_s , rack run status and refrigerant type as inputs. The return gas and flood back monitoring block **2800** processes the inputs and generates a daily average superheat (SH), a daily average T_s (T_{savg}) and selectively generates a flood back notification. Another return gas and flood back monitoring block **2802** selectively generates a system performance degraded notice based on SH and T_{savg} .

[0104] Referring now to FIG. 29, the algorithm calculates a saturated T_s (T_{ssat}) based on P_s in step **2900**. The algorithm also calculates SH as the difference between T_s and T_{ssat} in step **2900**. In step **2902**, the algorithm determines whether SH is less than a superheat threshold (SH_{THR}) for a threshold time (t_{THRESH}). If SH is not less than SH_{THR} for t_{THRESH} , the algorithm loops back to step **2900**. If SH is less than SH_{THR} for t_{THRESH} , the algorithm generates a flood back detected notification in step **2904** and the algorithm ends.

[0105] In step **2908**, the algorithm calculates an SH daily average (SH_{DA}) and T_{savg} provided that the rack is running (i.e., at least one compressor in the rack is running, all sensors are generating valid data and the number of good data for averaging are at least 20% of the total data sample. If these conditions are not met, the algorithm sets $SH_{DA} = -100$ and $T_{savg} = -100$. In step **2910**, the algorithm determines whether SH_{DA} or T_{savg} change by a threshold percent (PCT_{THR}) as compared to respective benchmark values. If neither SH_{DA} nor T_{savg} change by PCT_{THR} , the algorithm ends. If

either SH_{DA} or T_{avg} changes by PCT_{THR} , the algorithm generates a system performance effected algorithm in step 2912 and the algorithm ends.

[0106] The algorithm may also calculate a superheat rate of change over time. An increasing superheat may indicate an impending flood back condition. Likewise, a decreasing superheat may indicate an impending degraded performance condition. The algorithm compares the superheat rate of change to a rate threshold maximum and a rate threshold minimum, and determines whether the superheat is increases or decreasing at a rapid rate. In such case, a notification is generated.

[0107] Compressor contactor monitoring provides information including, but not limited to, contactor life (typically specified as number of cycles after which contactor needs to be replaced) and excessive cycling of compressor, which is detrimental to the compressor. The contactor sensing mechanism can be either internal (e.g., an input parameter to a controller which also accumulates the cycle count) or external (e.g., an external current sensor or auxiliary contact).

[0108] Referring now to FIG. 30, the contactor maintenance algorithm selectively generates notifications based on how long it will take to reach the maximum count using a current cycling rate. For example, if the number of predicted days required to reach maximum count is between 45 and 90 days a notice is generated. If the number of predicted days is between 7 and 45 days a warning is generated and if the number of predicated days is less then 7, an alarm is generated. A contactor maintenance block 3000 receives the contactor ON/OFF status, a contactor reset flag and a maximum contactor cycle count (N_{MAX}) as inputs. The contactor maintenance block 3000 generates a notification based on the input.

[0109] Referring now to FIG. 31, the algorithm determines whether the reset flag is set in step 3100. If the reset flag is set, the algorithm continues in step 3102. If the reset flag is not set, the algorithm continues in step 3104. In step 3102, the algorithm sets an accumulated counter (C_{ACC}) equal to zero. In step 3104, the algorithm determines a daily count (C_{DAILY}) of the particular contactor, updates C_{ACC} based on C_{DAILY} and determines the number of predicted days until service ($D_{PREDSEV}$) based on the following equation:

$$D_{PREDSEV} = (N_{MAX} - C_{ACC}) / C_{DAILY}$$

[0110] In step 3106, the algorithm determines whether $D_{PREDSEV}$ is less than a first threshold number of days (D_{THR1}) and is greater than or equal to a second threshold number of days (D_{THR2}). If $D_{PREDSEV}$ is less than D_{THR1} and is greater than or equal to D_{THR2} , the algorithm loops back to step 3100. If $D_{PREDSEV}$ is not less than D_{THR1} or is not greater than or equal to D_{THR2} , the algorithm continues in step 3108. In step 3108, the algorithm generates a notification that contactor service is required and ends.

[0111] An excessive contactor cycling algorithm watches for signs of excessive cycling. Excessive cycling of the compressor for an extended period of time reduces the life of compressor. The algorithm generates at least one notification a week to notify of excessive cycling. The algorithm makes use of point system to avoid nuisance alarm. FIG. 32 illustrates a contactor excessive cycling block 3200, which receives contactor ON/OFF status as an input. The contactor excessive cycling block 3200 selectively generates a notification based on the input.

[0112] Referring now to FIG. 33, the algorithm determines the number of cycling counts (N_{CYCLE}) each hour and assigns cycling points (N_{POINTS}) based thereon. For example, if N_{CYCLE}/hour is between 6 and 12, N_{POINTS} is equal to 1. if N_{CYCLE}/hour is between 12 and 18, N_{POINTS} is equal to 3 and if N_{CYCLE}/hour is greater than 18, N_{POINTS} is equal to 1. In step 3302, the algorithm determines the accumulated N_{POINTS} ($N_{POINTSACC}$) for a time period (e.g., 7 days). In step 3304, the algorithm determines whether $N_{POINTSACC}$ is greater than a threshold number of points (P_{THR}). If $N_{POINTSACC}$ is not greater than P_{THR} , the algorithm loops back to step 3300. If $N_{POINTSACC}$ is greater than P_{THR} , the algorithm issues a notification in step 3306 and ends.

[0113] The compressor run-time monitoring algorithm monitors the run-time of the compressor. After a threshold compressor run-time ($t_{COMPTHR}$), a routine maintenance such as oil change or the like is required. When the run-time is close to $t_{COMPTHR}$, a notification is generated. Referring now to FIG. 34, a compressor maintenance block 3400 receives an accumulated compressor run-time ($t_{COMPACC}$), a reset flag and $t_{COMPTHR}$ as inputs. The compressor maintenance block 3400 selectively generates a notification based on the inputs.

[0114] Referring not to FIG. 35, the algorithm determines whether the reset flag is set in step 3500. If the reset flag is set, the algorithm continues in step 3502. If the reset flag is not set, the algorithm continues in step 3504. In step 3502, the algorithm sets $t_{COMPACC}$ equal to zero. In step 3504, the algorithm calculates the daily compressor run time ($t_{COMPDAIly}$) and predicts the number of days until service is required ($t_{COMPSERV}$) based on the following equation:

$$t_{COMPSERV} = (t_{COMPTHR} - t_{COMPACC}) / t_{COMPDAIly}$$

[0115] In step 3506, the algorithm determines whether $t_{COMPSERV}$ is less than a first threshold (D_{THR1}) and greater than or equal to a second threshold (D_{THR2}). If $t_{COMPSERV}$ is not less than D_{THR1} or is not greater than or equal to D_{THR2} , the algorithm loops back to step 3500. If $t_{COMPSERV}$ is less than D_{THR1} and is greater than or equal to D_{THR2} , the algorithm issues a notification in step 3508 and ends.

[0116] Refrigerant level within the refrigeration system 100 is a function of refrigeration load, ambient temperatures, defrost status, heat reclaim status and refrigerant charge. A reservoir level indicator (not shown) reads accurately when the system is running and stable and it varies with the cooling load. When the system is turned off, refrigerant pools in the coldest parts of the system and the level indicator may provide a false reading. The refrigerant loss detection algorithm determines whether there is leakage in the refrigeration system 100.

[0117] Refrigerant leak can occur as a slow leak or a fast leak. A fast leak is readily recognizable because the refrigerant level in the optional receiver will drop to zero in a very short period of time. However, a slow leak is difficult to quickly recognize. The refrigerant level in the receiver can widely vary throughout a given day. To extract meaningful information, hourly and daily refrigerant level averages ($RL_{HRLYAVG}$, $RL_{DAILYAVG}$) are monitored. If the refrigerant is not present in the receiver should be present in the condenser. The volume of refrigerant in the condenser is proportional to the temperature difference between ambient air and condenser temperature. Refrigerant loss is detected by collectively monitoring these parameters.

[0118] Referring now to FIG. 36, a first refrigerant charge monitoring block 3600 receives receiver refrigerant level (RL_{REC}), P_d , T_a , a rack run status, a reset flag and the refrigerant type as inputs. The first refrigerant charge monitoring block 3600 generates $RL_{HRLYAVG}$, $RL_{DAILYAVG}$, $TD_{HRLYAVG}$, $TD_{DAILYAVG}$, a reset date and selectively generates a notification based on the inputs. $RL_{HRLYAVG}$, $RL_{DAILYAVG}$, $TD_{HRLYAVG}$, $TD_{DAILYAVG}$ and the reset date are inputs to a second refrigerant charge monitoring block 3602, which selectively generates a notification based thereon. It is anticipated that the first monitoring block 3600 is resident within and processes the algorithm within the refrigerant controller 140. The second monitoring block 3602 is resident within and processes the algorithm within the processing center 160. The algorithm generates a refrigerant level model based on the monitoring of the refrigerant levels. The algorithm determines an expected refrigerant level based on the model, and compares the current refrigerant level to the expected refrigerant level.

[0119] Referring now to FIG. 37, the refrigerant loss detection algorithm calculates T_{dsat} based on P_d and calculates TD as the difference between T_{dsat} and T_a in step 3700. In step 3702, the algorithm determines whether RL_{REC} is less than a first threshold (RL_{THR1}) for a first threshold time (t_1) or whether RL_{REC} is greater than a second threshold (RL_{THR2}) for a second threshold time (t_2). If RL_{REC} is not less than RL_{THR1} for t_1 , and RL_{REC} is not greater than RL_{THR2} for t_2 , the algorithm loops back to step 3700. If RL_{REC} is less than RL_{THR1} for t_1 or RL_{REC} is greater than RL_{THR2} for t_2 , the algorithm issues a notification in step 3704 and ends.

[0120] In step 3706, the algorithm calculates $RL_{HRLYAVG}$ and $RL_{DAILYAVG}$ provided that the rack is operating, all sensors are providing valid data and the number of good data points is at least 20% of the total sample of data points. If these conditions are not met, the algorithm sets TD equal to -100 and RL_{REC} equal to -100. In step 3708, RL_{REC} , $RL_{HRLYAVG}$, $RL_{DAILYAVG}$, TD and the reset flag date (if a reset was initiated) are logged.

[0121] Referring now to FIG. 38, the algorithm calculates expected daily RL values. The algorithm determines whether the reset flag has been set in step 3800. If the reset flag has been set, the algorithm continues in step 3802. If the reset flag has not been set, the algorithm continues in step 3804. In step 3802, the algorithm calculates TD_{HRLY} and plots the function RL_{REC} versus TD, according to the function $RL_{REC} = Mb \times TD + Cb$, where Mb is the slope of the line and Cb is the Y-intercept. In step 3804, the algorithm calculates expected $RL_{DAILYAVG}$ based on the function. In step 3806, the algorithm determines whether the expected $RL_{DAILYAVG}$ minus the actual $RL_{DAILYAVG}$ is greater than a threshold percentage. When the difference is not greater than the threshold percentage, the algorithm ends. When the difference is greater than the threshold, a notification is issued in step 3808, and the algorithm ends.

[0122] P_s and P_d have significant implications on overall refrigeration system performance. For example, if P_s is lowered by 1 PSI, the compressor power increases by about 2%. Additionally, any drift in P_s and P_d may indicate malfunctioning of sensors or some other system change such as set point change. The suction and discharge pressure monitoring algorithm calculates daily averages of these param-

eters and archives these values in the server. The algorithm initiates an alarm when there is a significant change in the averages. FIG. 39 illustrates a suction and discharge pressure monitoring block 3900 that receives P_s , P_d and a pack status as inputs. The suction and discharge pressure monitoring block 3900 selectively generates a notification based on the inputs.

[0123] Referring now to FIG. 40, the suction and discharge pressure monitoring algorithm calculates daily averages of P_s and P_d (P_{sAVG} and P_{dAVG} , respectively) in step 4000 provided that the rack is operating, all sensors are generating valid data and the number of good data points is at least 20% of the total number of data points. If these conditions are not met, the algorithm sets P_{sAVG} equal to -100 and P_{dAVG} equal to -100. In step 4002, the algorithm determines whether the absolute value of the difference between a current P_{sAVG} and a previous P_{sAVG} is greater than a suction pressure threshold (P_{sTHR}). If the absolute value of the difference between the current P_{sAVG} and the previous P_{sAVG} is greater than P_{sTHR} , the algorithm issues a notification in step 4004 and ends. If the absolute value of the difference between the current P_{sAVG} and the previous P_{sAVG} is not greater than P_{sTHR} , the algorithm continues in step 4006.

[0124] In step 4006, the algorithm determines whether the absolute value of the difference between a current P_{dAVG} and a previous P_{dAVG} is greater than a discharge pressure threshold (P_{dTHR}). If the absolute value of the difference between the current P_{dAVG} and the previous P_{dAVG} is greater than P_{dTHR} , the algorithm issues a notification in step 4008 and ends. If the absolute value of the difference between the current P_{dAVG} and the previous P_{dAVG} is not greater than P_{dTHR} , the algorithm ends. Alternatively, the algorithm may compare P_{dAVG} and P_{sAVG} to predetermined ideal discharge and suction pressures.

[0125] The description is merely exemplary in nature and, thus, variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the teachings.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

counting occurrences of a compressor operating event;

calculating a cumulative total of said compressor operating events;

comparing said cumulative total with an operating threshold; and

estimating a time period until said cumulative total exceeds said operating threshold.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining when maintenance will be required based on said estimating.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said maintenance comprises replacing an electrical contactor.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said compressor operating event comprises a cycling of said electrical contactor, and wherein said operating threshold comprises a maximum cycle count.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising calculating a cycle rate based on said cumulative total, wherein said estimating said time period is based on said cycle rate.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein said maintenance comprises a compressor oil change.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said compressor operating event comprises a compressor operating time unit.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising calculating an operating rate based on said cumulative total, wherein said estimating said time period is based on said operating rate.

9. The method of claim 3, further comprising generating a notification based on said determining.

10. The method of claim 6, further comprising generating a notification indicating said maintenance is required.

11. A controller that executes the method of claim 1.

12. A controller that executes the method of claim 2.

13. A controller that executes the method of claim 3.

14. A controller that executes the method of claim 4.

15. A controller that executes the method of claim 5.

16. A controller that executes the method of claim 6.

17. A controller that executes the method of claim 7.

18. A controller that executes the method of claim 8.

19. A controller that executes the method of claim 9.

20. A controller that executes the method of claim 10.

21. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.

22. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 2.

23. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 3.

24. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 4.

25. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 5.

26. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 6.

27. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 7.

28. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 8.

29. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 9.

30. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 10.

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